UNSEARCHABLE RICHES

OF

CHRIST

AND OF

GRACE AND GLORY,

IN AND THROUGH HIM.

Diligently fearched into, clearly unfolded, and comfortably holden forth, in Fourteen rich Gospel-Sermons preached on several Texts, at communions in Glasgow.

By the late pious and powerful gospel preacher in that City,
MR. J A M E S D U-R H A M,
Author of the Commentary on the Revelation, &c.

I JOHN i. 3. That which we have feen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 COR. X. 16. The cup of bleffing which we blefs, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

BERWICK:

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY

AND PREFATORY.

To all Christians seriously pursuing conformity unto Christ, and panting after communion with God in him; particularly the inhabitants of the city of Glasgow, that are such; and in special to Mrs. Durham, the samous author's worthy relict, and my sister-in-law, who hath had a singular care to preserve her deceased Husband's Lecture and Sermons, that they might be made forthcoming for the public use and edification of the church:

Dear Friends;

DAM in innocency and integrity was in a state of perfect friendship with God, of beautiful conformity to his image, and of sweetly comfortable communion with him. But, alas! he continued very thort in that excellent state; for the entering in of fin, by his transgressing the law and condition of the covenant of works, quite brake off the friendship, utterly disfigured and defaced the conformity, and altogether interrupted and put a stop to the communion; he having thereby run himself and his posterity under a forfeiture of that desirable state, and of all the precious privileges annexed to it; under which himself and they had lien eternally, had not God, in the depth of his in finite wisdom, and in the exceeding and unsearchable riches of grace and mercy, devised and found out a way for taking off that forfeiture, " by fending his "Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to re" deem them that were under the law;" who according; to the covenant of redemption, treated and transacted, finally concluded and agreed betwixt Jehovah and him, having made a most costly, but a most complete fatisfaction to provoked divine Justice for the debt of the elect: in whose room, for that end, he did surrogate and substitute himself as their surety and cautioner, hath re-established the friendship, restored the conformity, and recovered the communion: of which glad tidings of great joy, publication is made in the preached gofpel; the tabernacle of the ordinances whereof is reared up amongst men, that thereby "God the Lord may w dwell among them;" these ordinances in their institution and nature being means of communion and fellowship betwixt God and men: amongst which divinely instituted ordinances, that of the Lord's supper beareth expressly the name of the communion, because often and ordinarily the greatest measures and highest degrees of communion with God in Christ, attainable by fojourning and militant faints here on earth, are won at in the participation of that ordinance, the great pledge and love-token of our dying Lord's dearest refpect to his disciples and followers, calling and obliging them, in the use thereof, to a folemn commemoration of him and of his love, and to a public and avouched declaration of his death till he come again. Therefore it is beyond all other gospel-ordinances, as it were, railed about with fuch injunctions, cautions, and warnings, with fuch terrible threatenings, with fuch intimations of atrocious guilt, and with fuch denunciations of formidable judgments against unworthy communicants, thunders and lightnings, as it were, being spoken against such. The defirable deceased Author of these few following sermons preached at communions, used at such occasions to endeavour, through grace, to rouse and work up himself to such a divineness of frame, as very much suited the spiritual state and majesty of that ordinance, greatly fearing lest him. felf, or any of the people to whom he dispensed the

fame, should fall under the grievous "guilt of the body " and blood of the Lord:" Then, in a manner, his face shone, as being in the mount of communion and fellowship with God; and, at some of those solemn and fweet occasions, he spake some way as a man that had been in heaven, commending Jesus Christ, making a glorious display of the banner of free grace, holding forth the riches of it very clearly and convincingly, and bringing the offers thereof very low, wonderfully low; so that, in hearing some of those fermons. particularly that on Mat. xxii. I was made to think, that the rope or cord of the offer of falvation was let down and hung fo low to finners, that those of the lowest stature amongst them all, though but as Pigmies, might have catched hold of it, who, through grace, had any mind to do fo; and fo home, fo vehemently and urgently pressed, on so sweet and easy terms to be embraced, that I have been fometimes made to wonder how the hearers could refuse, or shift them. But there is no faving belief of this report made by the prophets. apostles, yea, or by the blessed Jesus himself in his own personal ministry, but where "the arm of the " Lord is revealed; no man can, or will (invite, befeech and perfuade who will, if it were not only " men, but even angels,) come to the Son, except the " Father that fent him draw him." There is no mov. ing here without a pull of Omnipotency; none are nor can be willing to yield themselves to Christ, till "the day of his power" pass on their hearts; till then, they will fit the most pressing calls of the gospel, but then they can fit no longer, they must, they will rife then, and run after him; they will then (as the word fignifies) make a free-will offering of themselves tohim, however inexorable and inflexible they had shewed themselves before; they will then make an abfolute, entire, universal, unexceptioned, and irreversible furrender and refignation of themselves to him, to be at his disposal, to be guided and saved by him in his own way. I know, the remembrance of those com-

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munion-fabbaths, high-fabbaths, and other ordinary fabbaths and week-days, wherein your fifter, and other ferious feekers of God in Glafgow in particular, " heard the joyful found, walked in the light of God's " countenance, and rejoiced in his name all the day,". living in a holy croud of precious gospel-ordinances, and having, as it were, the heavenly manna of the gospel falling abundantly about your camp, every day making you think and fay, " That it was good to be "there," is this day fweet and favoury to you, and helps you, in a good measure, to keep up a suitable and due esteem of fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jefus Christ, which is commended and endeared to your fouls, and to the fouls of others of the Lord's people, by the choice, rare, excellent, and nonfuch nature and properties of it; it being found by you all, privileged with admiffion to the enjoyment hereof, in your experience, to be, first, most real, and no chimerical fancy, or a thing that hath no being but in the deluded imagination of the person: " And truly (faith the apostle John, " I John i. 3.) our fellowship is with the Father, and " with his Son Jefus Christ." It hath most real effects, though spiritual, gracious souls being more lively affected with them, than their very external fenfes are by the rarest and most remarkable effects. And no doubt, the more spiritual any thing is, it hath in it the greater reality, and worketh the more powerfully and efficaciously. It is uncontrovertible, and quite removed from all reach of rational debate, that God is the greatest reality; and, by proportion, communion with God, whereby nearest and closest approaches are made to him, must be very real. Marvellous are the effects of this communion, "and that your fouls know " right well," as the Pfalmist speaketh, Pfal. cxxxix. 14. in another case. Secondly, It is an awful fellowship, and full of dread; it impresseth the soul with a deep, yet kindly, veneration of the glorious majesty of the great and holy God, "who (as it is faid, Pfal.

" lxxxix. 7.) is greatly to be feared in the affemblies " of his faints, (where they are admited to fellowship " with him.) and to be had in reverence by all that " are about him." When Jacob was admitted to very near communion with him, Gen. xxviii. he faith, ver. 16. " Surely the Lord was in this place, and I was not " aware." And ver. 17. it is faid of him, that " he " was afraid, and faid, How dreadful is this place! " this is none other but the house of God, and this is " the gate of heaven." Familiarity here breeds no contempt, nor is it attended with any neglect or forgetfulness to keep due distance .- Thirdly, It is a deeply humbling, and holy felf-debasing fellowship; as appears in Abraham, Gen. xviii. who being, as God's special friend, admitted to talk with him at an unusual and extraordinary rate of familiarity, yet interlines, as it were, his discourse, almost in every period of it, with deeply felf-debasing acknowledgments of his being but dust and ashes; and depracatings of God's anger for his taking upon him to fpeak to him, betwixt whom and himself there was so infinitely vast a disproportion. So the prophet Isaiah when he hath that glorious vision of the majesty of God, chap. vi. and hears the feraphims, those purely intellectual creatures, having their faces covered with their wings, as not being able to behold the brightness of the glory of the most absolutely perfect holiness of God, crying, in a transport of admiration, each to another, " Holy, holy, holy is "the Lord God of hofts; the earth is full of his glo-"ry!" he faith, "Wo is me, for I am undone, be-"cause I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the " midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes " have feen the King, the Lord of hofts." So also Job, according to divine testimony, when he is admitted to unusual nearness to God, saith, chap. xlii. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but " now mine eye feeth thee; wherefore I abhor myfelf, "and repent in dust and ashes." The nearest approaches to that light wherein there is no darkness at

all, make the clearest discoveries of the most eminent faint's unworthiness, nothingness, and vileness .----Fourthy, it is a transforming fellowship, and assimilates the person privileged with admission to it, to him that is converfed with, and with whom fellowship is attained unto; there is no real communion with him. but the refult of it is some lineament of further likeness to him: "We all (faith the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18.). beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glafs, are " changed (or transformed) into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Communion with, and conformity to God, have mutual influence and reciprocal force upon each other. The more communion with him, the more likeness and conformity to him; the more likeness to him the more communion with him; little communion with him, makes little conformity to him, and little conformity to him cannot but be attended with little communion with him. Fifthly, It is a wonderful fellowship, a fellowship that even fometimes transports, in a manner, the foul admitted to it, especially in any more than or dinary way or measure, into a fort of rapture and ecstary or admiration at it: thus it did David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. "Who, faith he, am I, O Lord, and what is my fa-"ther's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And Solomon, who being very near to God, in that folemn prayer of his at the dedication of the temple. faith, r Kings viii. 27. "But will God indeed dwell with men on earth?" And, as it is, 2 Chron. vi. 18. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth?" And indeed it is no great wonder that it be greatly. wondered at, that the infinitely great and holy God? "who inhabiteth eternity," and "the high and lofty "One who dwelleth in the high and holy place," and is furrounded and attended time with an innumerable company of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, all of them thining in light, and burning in zeal, none of them wearying to do him service, thould humble himself so far, and stoop so low, so

very low; as to dwell "alfo (an emphatic alfo) with " finful, though humble and contrite creatures, who " dwell in cottages of clay, and whole habitation is in "the dust;" that he who is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity, without detestation and abhorrence, should yet humble himself, not only to behold, but with delight to dwell and keep fellowship with them who are in a great measure unholy, and have so much of that dwelling in them which his foul hates; that the glorious Persons of the dreadful and adorable Godhead should come and make their abode with fuch, in whom so great a remainder of stinking unmortified corruption hath still its abode; that infinitely pure and perfect light should have fellowship with om there is fo much darkness. Sixthly, It them in is an estranging fellowship from all idols, and whatever is displeasing to God and estranging from him. Accordingly Ephraim, being brought near to him, faith, Hof. xiv. 8. "What have I to do any more with idols?" And the people of God, supposed to be in a good spiritual frame, and near to him, fay, Ifa. xxx. 22. to every idol (which they cast away as a menstruous cloth) with indignation and abhorrence, " Get thee hence." And David, being admitted to very near communion with God, Pfal. vi. faith, ver. 8. to wicked men, by whose company he might have been estranged from him, " Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, the Lord hath heard the voice of my fupplication." And indeed it is highly fuitable and congruous, that it should be so; " for what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" and believers are "the temple of the living God," as the apostle affirms, 2 Cor. vi. 16 .-- Seventhly, It is a heart-quickening and reviving fellowship, therefore he is said, Isa. lvii. 15. to "dwell with him that is humble and of a contrite " fpirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to re-" vive the heart of the contrite one." Eighthly, It is a heart-staying, calming, and composing fellowship:

it hutheth into filence, and drives away disquieting, perplexing, and excruciating fears; and therefore faith the Pfalmilt, when near to God, Pfal. iii. 5, 6. "I laid " me down and flept; I waked, for the Lord fustain-" ed me: I will not be afraid of ten thousands of peo-" ple that have fet themselves against me round about," And Pfal. iv. 8. " I will both lay me down in peace and fleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in " fafety." So, Pfal. xxvii, 13, 14. Ninthly, It is a heart-cheering, refreshing, and rejoicing fellowship: the refreshing and joy that refults from fellowship with God, do quite surpass and transcend the joy that the men of the world have in the enjoyment of all their earthly pleasures. "Lift thou up," (faith the Psalmist in the name of the godly, Pfal. iv. 7. in intra-diftinction from, and opposition to, those many who cry, "Who will fhew us any good " debafing, and in a manner brutifying themselves, as if they had not rational and immortal fouls capable of enjoying God the chief good, the only object fuited completely to fatisfy their most enlarged desires), "Lord, lift thou up the ilight of thy countenance upon us; for thou haft " caused more joy of heart to me, (to wit, thereby) than when their corn and wine abound." And Pfal. lxxxix, 16. those who walk in the light of his countenance, are faid to "rejoice in his name all the "day." Thus, when he prays, Pfal. xliii. for admission. to fellowship with God in his public ordinances (to which he had gone with others of his people, " with " the voice of joy and gladness, as they that keep holy-"days," as he telleth us in the preceding plalm) he promifeth in that case, that he will "go unto the altar of "God, to God his exceeding joy," the gladness or joy of his jo, the very heart and foul of his joy, or the cream of it, as some translations render the word. There is reality, folidity, strength, and efficacy in that joy; it is heart-joy, while as in the very midst of the carnal joy. jollity, and mirth of natural men, arising from the greatest affluence of worldly pleasures and enjoyments.

"their heart is forrowful," as Solomon faith! There is no folidity in it, it hath not a bottom; if they would but a little retire within themselves, and ask for a reason of their laughter, mirth, and jollity, it would instantly evanish, and their hearts would die within them as stones; it is kept up, to their delusion and ruin, by their abstracting from, and non-reflecting upon the unfolidity and irrelevancy of the grounds thereof: but the more the ground of this joy of the godly is reflected on, confidered, and fearched into, they are found to be the more able to bear the highest superstructures of their joy .---- Tenthly, It is fuch a fellowship, that, whatever measures of it be attained by fojourning faints, it wakeneth defires, tharpeneth appetite, and stirreth up kindly longings for more and more of it, even till it be completed. Thus Mofes the man of God, and his great favourite, whom he knew face to face, when admitted to very much familiar fellowship with him, and is told, that he had found grace in his fight, that he knew him by name. and that at his earnest defire his presence should go with him, Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13, 14, yet faith to the Lord, ver. 18. "I befeech thee, fliew me thy glory." So holy Job, God's darling, whose candle shined on his head, by whose light he walked through darkness. and on whose tabernable the secret of God was, yet with much holy longing cries, chap. xxiii. 3. " O that I knew where I might find him! I would come even to his feat." And comforts himself amidst all his forrows, with the affured hope of the fully fatisfying fight and enjoyment of his Redeemer at the latter day, So likewife the fpoufe in the Song, who had often been brought into the banqueting-house, having the banner of her Beloved's love spread over her; whose left hand had lain often under her head, and whole right hand had embraced her; who had often fat down under his madow with great delight, and found his fruit sweet to her tafte; whose spikenard did send forth the smell thereof, while the King sat at his ta-

ble: who had frequently found, by the kiffes of his mouth, his love to be better than wine; and to whom he had often given his loves in the vineyards: yet cries. in the conclusion of that high fong, " Make haste (or "flee) my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a "young hart upon the mountains of spices." So was it also with David, the man according to God's heart, who had much fweet communion with him in his wanderings and wilderness-condition, in caves and dens of the earth; and had often feen his power and his glory in the fanctuary; yet pants and breathes after more fellowship with him, even as the chased hart doth after the water brooks, and cries, " When shall I " come and appear before God?" Pfal xlii. So in like manner was it with the apostle Paul, Christ's great minion, who, befide all the good days he had in difpenfing gospel ordinances, in planting and watering churches, in converting and edifying multitudes of fouls, in his triumphing, by making manifest the sayour of Christ's knowledge, had been ravished in the third heavens, caught up into paradife, and heard there unspeakable words, that were not lawful, or posfible to be uttered; yet, as if he had never been with him, "defired to be diffolved, and to be with Christ, " as best of all; and groans within himself, longing to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." And thus was it, finally, with John the divine, the beloved disciple, who had often lain in his fweet Mafter's botom, and could confidently fay, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with " his Son Jesus Christ," closeth his Revelations with that holy passionate desire, "Even so; come, Lord " Tefus."

Dear friends, let it be more than ever your great work and business to keep yourselves in case and capacity to enjoy his blessed company and fellowship: and, in order to this end, 1. Study to keep yourselves, through grace, as chaste virgins to Christ Jesus as your one husband; let him be to you as the loving hart and

pleafant roe; let his embraces fatisfy you at all times, and be ye always ravished with his love, and beware of embracing the bosom of a stranger; let him be to you as a bundle of myrrh lying all night betwixt your breafts; be for him, and not for another, so shall he be for and with you, resting in his love, and rejoicing over you with finging. 2. Touch no unclean thing, hate the very garment spotted with the flesh, abstain tenderly from all appearance of evil. O defile not those temples of the living God, of the Holy Ghost, which temples ye are; let no unclean thing be harboured or tolerated there, nothing that may provoke him to leave or leath his dwelling and temple, nothing that may make his abode in them grievous, unpleafant, loathfome, or wearifome to him. 3. Let all his ordinances and duties of his worthip be high in your esteem, and much commended, and even endeared to your hearts, as means of communion and fellowship with him. O be much in love with the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwells: let his tabernacles be very amiable to you; these are his haunt, and let them be yours. 4. Beware of all finful dalliances with idols, whereby the foul is effranged from communion with God; for there is no agreement betwixt the temple of God and idols; from love to fellowship with him, and from zeal to his glory, bid them all, with indignation, be gone, faying to them, "What have we any more to do with idols?" and as to a menstruous cloth, Get you hence. 5. When he hides his face, withdraws his presence, and suspends you from fellowship with him, be troubled, arise, fhake off laziness, sloth, and security; be holily restless, and go the round, as it were, of all commanded duties, till you find him; feek him diligently in the nightwatches on your bed; go forth to the streets and broad places; go to the watchmen, and feek him whom your fouls love: you will have gone but a little, and you shall find him; and, when you have found him, hold him, and let him not go; do not wake nor raise him

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till he please. 6. Study to be very humble, tender. and contrite of heart, to be poor of spirit, constantly fensible of your spiritual poverty, emptiness, wants, and indigencies; and to tremble at his word: at commands, lest they be not suitably obeyed; at threatenings, left they be executed; at promifes, left you feem to come short of them: for it is in persons thus qualified that he delights to dwell, and it is to fuch that he loyes to look, as is very clear, Isa. lvii. 15. and lxvi. 2. 7. Love, prize, improve, and, as ye have access, study to keep up (as you, fifter, in particular are helped, through grace, to do beyond many) the communion of faints, those excellent ones of the earth, in whom, next to to his own bleffed felf, all your delights should be. In communion with those faints, communion with the King of faints is readily attained, it being here that he commands the bleffing, even life for evermore. 8. Be much in the lively exercise of faith in, and of love to, the Lord Jesus: and be spiritually precise, strict, exact, accurate, and punctual in obedience to all his commands, from principles of faith and love; and Christ and his Father will love you, and come and make their abode with you, as he promifeth, John xiv, 21, 23. Q defirable guests, and worthy of all possible welcome, of all ready and cheerful entertainment! Follow hard after him, conftantly and closely purfue conformity to him, and communion with him: it is but a little, and the conformity to him shall be completed, and you likened perfectly to him according to creature capacity; and the communion with him which is now but in part, (as all the spiritual privileges and enjoyments of the people of God, while upon earth, are), shall be fully perfected, shall be immediate, without the intervention of the comparatively dark glass of ordinances, even to seeing him face to face, and as he is; and shall be eternally uninterrupted, without the least cloud or moment's eclipse. Now it is a cloud and a clear day, a fun blink, and anon a shower, " rara hora, brevis mora," a rare hour,

but quickly gone; it shall not be so then. O desirable and delightsome day! O sweet, singularly sweet and solacing day! O rare and ravishing day! Let all other days pass and hasten away, and let that glorious day come: even so; come, Lord Jesus, and tarry not.

I am,

Beloved Christian Friends,

And dear Sifter,

Your very affectionate friend,

and feriously well-wishing fervant in the gospel,

J. C.

I heartily wish that this mite of service may be acceptable to the saints, it being not improbable that it may be the last service of this kind that I shall have access to do them.

Feb. 4. 1685.

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For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

IT hath been so ordered in the good providence of God, that ye have lately heard of that main, very comprehensive, and indispensibly necessary duty, called for from all that would worthily partake of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, for which we are now making ready, viz. felf-examination; in reference to which, the apostle having perceived many faults and failings in these Corinthians, and much umfuitableness as to their communicating, gives advertisement, that whoever for the time to come would aright approach to the table of the Lord, " should examine themselves, and fo eat." And, knowing well that this is a difficult exercise, and that there is naturally a great deal of averseness in people's hearts to it, he judgeth it meet to press the exhortation to that necessary, though difficult, duty, by a reason or motive set down in the words now read in your hearing; " For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." As if he had said, You have need to look well to the examination of yourselves, for if ye neglect or miscarry in that duty, your hazard and darger is dreadfully great, through unworthy communicating; which if ye would escape, then make con-

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fcience narrowly and carefully to examine yourselves. The last words of the verse are a confirmation of the reason, and do show why the Lord is so holily severe in punishing and plaguing those who approach to his table unworthily, through not examining of themselves, because they discern not the Lord's body: the force whereof is, that there is a most singular and gracious presence of the Lord Christ in the sacrament of his supper; and therefore the person who goes not aright about it, doth put a great disrespect upon, yea, doth even vilisy him who is thus present in that ordinance.

It is the first part of these words, that at this time we would mainly speak to; wherein we would explicate the meaning of these three. 1st, To eat and drink unworthily, here, is to eat and drink unfuitably or unbecomingly; as the apostle, when he willeth the Chriftian Romans, chap. xvi. 2. to receive Phebe as becometh and is fuitable to faints, he makes use of the word worthily, for so it is in the original; and this, being the opposite to that, is to be understood unsuitably and unbecomingly to fuch a manifestation of the love of Christ, in giving himself to and for his people: as in our common language, when a man does a thing unfuitably, we fay he did it unworthily, when it an. fwers not the end proposed. 2dly, Judgment, or damnation, here, takes in these three things: 1. A temporal stroke; as, ver. 30, 31. "For this cause many among you are fickly and weak, and many sleep." 2. It may look to eternal judgment; as damnation is often taken in scripture. 3. It may look to spiritual indgments; for though a believer be not capable of eternal judgment, yet by unworthy communicating he may draw upon himself temporal strokes and spiritual judgments; he may much wear out the life of grace, and bring himfelf under blafting and withering: and unbelievers draw upon themselves not only those, but eternal damnation, and that with a higher degree of aggravation. 3dly, That he is faid to eat and drink this to himself, as in the former verse a man is commanded to examine hinsels: it may take in these two, as aimed at by the apostle: 1. It is to provoke every man to his particular duty, from his particular hazard; he hazards his own soul. 2. It is put here, to shew the restriction of the judgment according to the sin; and so, if a man examine himsels, though others neglect it, the judgment shall not overtake him; but if he examine not himsels, whoever escapes judgment, he shall not escape it: and thus it is an encouragement to a man to go about the duty of self-examination, as well as a motive of terror. Corinth being corrupted with many abuses, one person could not amend all: well, (says he) "Let a man examine himsels," and so he shall escape the hazard; if not, he will fall under it.

We shall first draw some observations from the

words, and the speak a word for use.

First, It is supposed here, that in this ordinance of the Lord's supper there is a special eminency, excellency, dignity, and worth; or, this ordinance of the Lord's supper is of a fingular solemn nature: and this I gather partly from this verse considered in itself, "He that eats and drinks unworthily," implies that there is a special worthiness in it, that a man should not offer indignity to; and partly from the connection of this verse with the former; for it is made a reason why he presses particular and strict felf-examination; which shews that there is a more fingular excellency in this ordinance than in others; and partly from the context, for every circumftance speaks out a solemnity in this ordinance, as, (1.) The night when it was instituted, ver. 23. "The fame night in which he was betrayed:" and when he was taking his goodnight of his disciples. (2.) His jealousy of, and his quarrelling and threatening for the abuse of this ordinance, speaks out a special excellency in the ordinance, that all who approach thereunto should be suitably affected with, All the ordinances of the Lord are excellent; for if all his works be excellent, then much more the gospelordinances, as being a step above those; and yet this

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ordinance of the Lord's supper seems dignified with an eminency and excellency above them all. 1. In reference to what it fets out and exhibits: they all fet out love, but this fets out love in an eminent degree: for it fets forth the Lord's death, wherein the most eminent step and degree of his love shines; yea, this ordinance fets out his actual dying, and to fets out his love in its liveliest colours, and as the great masterpiece of it. 2. In respect of the excellent benefits communicated in it: it is true, there is no other thing on the matter communicated in it, than there is communicated in the word and baptifm; yet, if we look to the words, "Take ye, eat ye; this is my body;" they hold out Christ Jesus not so much giving any particular gift, as actually conferring himself in his death and fuffering: and the main scope being to confer Christ and all that is in him to the believer, it holds out fome way the excellency of this ordinance beyond others. 3. In respect of the manner how our Lord Jesus makes over himself; whereby I mean not only the clearness of his making over himself; for int his ordinance there is the clearest view of a slain Saviour, and of covenanting with God, and often the most comfortable manifestations of love go alongst with it, for which cause it is called eminently The Communion: but also that there is here a clear glance of heaven upon earth, Jesus Christ and his people mixing, (to speak so) and being familiar together; he condescending not only to keep company with them, but to be their food and refeshment; and he giving them not only the word to their faith, but himself, as it were, to their fenfe, in fo er as the mean whereby he communicateth himself is more sensible; it is by his Spirit that the mean is made effectual. And there is not only a fixedness of faith on our part, but a fort of divineness in the ordinance itself; the very first-fruits of heaven being communicated, as it were, to the very femes of the believer; "I fay unto you, (fays the Lord, Mat. xxvi. 29.) I will not drink henceforth of

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with you in my Father's kingdom." Where he seems to point out a more special way of keeping communion with his people in this ordinance, in resemblance to that which he will have with them in heaven; there being here a more special union and communion betwixt the head and members sealed up, a type of that which is to be in heaven, a taste whereof is sometimes given in this ordinance of the communion: hence it is not only called the communion, as in the foregoing chapter, but the "communion of the body and blood of Christ," and the "table of the Lord."

The first use of it serves to let us fee how much we are obliged to Christ Jesus: what could he have given more than simfelf? And what mean could have been invented, that could have more confirmed and warmed the hearts of his people than this, which is so lively a representation and commemoration of his blessed body? Very like, we might come to discern his body better, if there were a more high estimation of this ordinance; not as if there were any efficacy in it of itfelf to communicate grace; yet, in respect of Christ's institution, it is a most lively mean of grace: and there is not a circumstance in all the action but it is to be wondered at; as, that it was instituted the same night he was betrayed, and after the paschal supper, when the traitor Judas was going to bring the band of foldiers to take him; that he warrants us to take it, and that we have therein fweet communion amongst ourselves: every thing in it ought to draw us to admire his fufferings, and the great love they came from, and the notable effects thereof to us.

The second use serves to provoke us to study to be in a solemn divine heavenly frame for such a solemn divine heavenly action as this is, and thoroughly to examine ourselves, and to see that all things be in good order; like to a bride that is to be married to-morrow, who will be trying on her marriage clothes, and seeing that all things be right. I shall not descend to particu-

lars, but, in three or four words in the general, only point at fuch a frame as we conceive is called for from von. 1. It should be such a frame as ye would defire to be in, if Christ were coming personally and visibly to marry you to-morrow. And O that this night might thus be a bridle or marriage-evening to us all! Confider what frame we would wish to be in, if we were to meet with him, and strike hands with him personally and visibly: study and feek after such a frame. 2. It should be such a frame as we would defire to have if we were going to give up the ghost, when all earthly things will be infignificant and of little worth to us; even such a frame as if our eternal peace and happiness were depending on that shock. This should be the night of making our terrament, as it were, and of the adjusting our accounts with God, and of putting things to a point betwixt him and us; otherwise our debt may increase and grow greater, and it will not be fo eafy for us to win to a discharge of it. 3. It should be such a frame as we would defire to be found in if the day of judgment were coming, and if that day were to be to-morrow. O how humble, how abstracted from the things of a present world, and how confirmed in the faith of God's love, would we study to be, if the voice of the archangel and of the last trumpet were founding, and a folemn meeting of all before the tribunal of Christ were prefently to be! What a frame, I fay, would ye defire to be in in fuch a case? Even such a frame should ye fludy to be in this night, as ye would defire to be found in, in that day. We fear it will then be to many a prick and fling in the consciences within them, that they made so little conscience to be in a fuitable frame for this fo folemn an ordinance. The text tells that a fentence will pass on every one of you, and you should by all means labour to be in such a posture as the fentence may not be terrible to you. 4. It should be a heavenly and divine frame; for, if it be a heavenly and divine action, ye should consider

what a frame it calleth for; how abstracted (as I just now said) the heart should be from the world, and from your carnal delights; how much in heaven, and conversant with God; what a pitch your communion with God should be raised to, in apprehending of, and meditating on him, in considering of, and admiring at the sufferings of Christ, and at the love they came from; tasting that he is good, and even delighting and solutions yourselves in his love; which is the Lord's allowance on his people, when the action is humbly and reverently gone about.

Secondly, observe, That though this be a most singularly folemn ordinance, and folemnly to be gone about, yet oft-times men and women go most unworthily about it, and abuse it. This is implied in the words, and we need not many proofs of it: if we will read from the 20th verse to this, we will find it sufficiently proved; and if we look forward to ver. 30. and 31. we will find that many fad strokes came on these Corinthians for abusing and profaning this ordinance and the apostle would have them gathering their unworthy communicating from these strokes. There is a readiness both in unbelievers and in believers themselves to miscarry in going about this ordinance: a readiness in unbelievers; for, as they spoil all things, all ordinances and duties they meddle with, all things being unclean to the unbeliever, fo there is a miferable and woeful necessity lying upon them to spoil this ordinance; and a readiness even in believers, who also may miscarry therein, as is implied in the last words of the chapter, compared with ver. 32. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Some of them that were believers were chastised for this fault, to prevent their eternal ruin. And are there any acquainted with their own corrupt nature, but they may and will in some measure find in themselves an aptitude to miscarry, as in all other duties and ordinances, to in this! But the doctrine holds out a fin-

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gular and peculiar bentness to miscarry in this duty and ordinance; so that one who will pray with advertency, and be carried fairly through in that and feveral other duties, may yet in this ordinance fall under the guilt of unworthy communicating. The reasons of it may be these, First, Because the more solemn the duty be, and the greater concurrence of duties be in it, there is the greater difficulty in going about it; for a foul cannot be right in this, except it be right in a number of other duties and graces, as in prayer, faith, love, and repentance: and that word, " Let a man examine himfelf," takes in a complication of duties and graces; there would be a good state and a good frame, and graces would be in some vigour, and every duty fuitable and proportionable to the nature of the action and of the day. And if it be a great and difficult work to carry rightly on an ordinary fabbath, or in prayer, or meditation, or other duties, any day, what a difficult work must it needs be to have all these rightly voked together? A fecond reason may be drawn not only from the complication of graces and duties, that is required in this action; but from the nature of the thing itself, that calls for duties in a high degree of spirituality. If any ordinance or duty call for a spiritual frame, it is this: it requires that the exercise of the judgment be most clear, that faith be most distinct, that meditation be most divine, &c. And the more spiritual the duty be, there is certainly the more aptness in us, through our corruption, to miscarry in it. A third reason is, Because there are men and women naturally and ordinarily who very little fludy or endeavour to know and take up aright the nature of this ordinance. There is in the most part a great ignorance of the strain and series of the gospel; but generally there is a greater ignorance, darkness, and blindness as to the right partaking of this ordinance, than as to most others; either through the difficulty of it, or through our laziness, that puts us not to study it better; so that if it were asked at many of us, who may have some

affection, What is a communion? and what is the right way of partaking of it? there would be found but very little diffinctness in the thing; and many content themselves to live without clearness about it: and this makes people incapable to go about it aright. A fourth reason is, from peoples lothness to bestir themselves in the work of preparation for it. There is fome felf examination requifite for every duty; but there is a more folemn felf-examination injoined in reference to this; and how very reluctant are we to it? And feeing examination of ourselves is as the door and entry to this duty, is it any wonder that most perfons communicate unworthily? this exercise of selffearching being so much flighted, which is to the most part so very difficult, and to many, through their own fault, impossible.

The first use serves for warning as to this matter. It is easy to get a token and to come to the table; but it is not fo easy to eat and drink worthily, not so easy to difcern the Lord's body, and to get Christ himself in the ordinance; and, in a word, fo to get about partaking of the Lord's fupper, as ye may have folid quietness of mind in reflecting on it. Is it not a wonder, then, that the most part do so securely, and, in a manner, even desperately rush upon it, who have lien, it may be, some ten, some twenty, some thirty years without trouble under this guilt? We would think it a good piece of preparation, if ye were feriously afraid to become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord: want of this holy fear breeds fecurity, and keeps from stirring up to duty, and from reflecting on ourselves; whereas, if the heart were stirred and roused with such a fear, there would be greater and more feriously sharpened diligence in all these duties, whereof we heard from the foregoing words, to which this is a strong and preffing motive.

The second use serves for trial, who among the great company gathered together here this day are afraid of sinning against God, and taking his name in

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vain in so solemn an ordinance. Many think they are prepared, but we think not that person the better prepared, that is not afraid and holily jealous over himself. Wo, wo to many on account of the communion days, that are past and gone without fear it were good that ye were afraid lest this day prove like many former days, and lest any of you come short of what hath been attained in former communion days.

Thirdly, observe, That the fin of unworthy communicating is a wrath-provoking and a judgmentdrawing on fin: "He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself." There is hardly any fin that the Lord will more readily, speedily, and fadly plague and punish, than this. It is true, the Lord hath annexed that certification to the third commandment, that "he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." But is there any ordinance wherein the threatening is more expressed, and in reference to which the judgment hath been more feverely and fome way indifferently inflicted? as is clear, whether we read before or after the words of the text; and there is good reason for it; for, it If the duty be more folemn, if the prefence in it be more gracious, and the bounty that flows be more abundant. then fure the fin of abusing, or of unbecoming going about it, must be the greater. 2. If we look to the fin, not only in respect of its greatness in several other respects, but in respect of the nature of it, it is a more direct difrespect put upon, and despite done in some refpect even unto Christ; it is to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; it is as if the fpear had been in fuch a man's hand that pierced Christ's fide, and as if he had driven by his own hand the nails through his hands and feet. The reason is, because Christ in this ordinance brings himself and his death so very near, that the finner is put to it in a special manner, either to receive him, or to refuse and reject him; and when he refuses and rejects him, the thereby practically fays, that he makes very little or no account of him

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out all, and that, if he had been living in those days when he was crucified, he would also have joined with other multitude, and cried, "Away with him;" Thus bruch an one "crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open shame." O heinous and horrid aguilt!

The first life serves to alarm you, That, if the fear of sin will not prevail with you, the fear of judgment, of God's curse and wrath, and of the vengeance of the Mediator (represented in this ordinance very clearly, as oruclised, and bleeding out his precious life for sinners) here, and eternally hereafter, may prevail with you to be ferious in the work ye are now called to.

Let me (which is a fecond and more particular ufe of the doctrine) advise you, as to examine yourselves feriously in reference to all your other ways, so to take a special look of your bygone communicating. O that many of you who are so whole at the heart, that there is no provoking nor awakening of you, and who are to fenfelels, that we fear at nothing, could be prevailed with to charge yourselves with this horrid fin of being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, that thereby ye may be awakened! It will certainly one day awake you; therefore, in your felf-examination, take special notice: if we have communicated unworthiby, make special addresses to God for removing of this dreadful guilt, and have a special eye for the time to come, that ye fall not in it. I fay again, take a special review of your bygone carriage in this ordinance, and fay to yourselves, Whether are we guilty of this fin? and whether are we in hazard to fall into it anew? And, to ftir you up to this, confider, F. What temporal frokes from God have come, or may come for it : who knows but our outward captivity, the blood that hath been flied, the many new and unheard of, or but very little heard of, diseases that are among us, have in a great part been for this fin? 2. Know, that, befide temporal firokes on the outward man, ye may fall under spiritual plagues:

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the Lord may blaft the ordinances for the time to come, that they shall do you no good; and he may blaft any parts and gifts that we have : he may make your ears dull of hearing, and your eyes blind, and your hearts fat. And, if ye quench any convictions that ye may possibly be under for the time, it may be that ye shall never be privileged with such convictions. again, nor be brought fo near heaven hereafter; but more delution and feduction by error, more profanity, fecurity, hypocrify, and prefumption, may break in among you. And though these be not thought much of now, by some at least, but looked at as very light things, yet the day will come when they will be found to be insupportably heavy; and men will be put rather to wish, that this house, wherein we now are, had fallen on them and bruifed them, or that the fword had fallen in upon them and flain them, than to lie under such a weight. 3. Know, that it may bring on eternal judgment: and O but this will draw deep on the score of many professors, even the abuse of the Lord's table, in partaking of his table, and of the table of devils! I shall name but a few fins here, that we would notice and try yourselves in as to this: 1st, Ye have often communicated, have ye also often examined yourfelves? Can many of you pitch on fuch an hour, or half-hour, that ye fet apart to try your foul's condition? - 2dly, I would ask, What repentance hath there been? Right examination makes discovery of guilt, and discovery of guilt brings out repentance, which hath fome pricking and foul-panging with it. edly, What effect hath followed? what engagements have been kept? how many of us reformed our walk? is not our carriage as it was? paffion and pride as quick and lively as they had wont to be deadness, fecurity, and worldly-mindedness as they were before? Are we not as little felf-denied, as unready to forgive, as ignorant, and having as little knowledge of gospelmysteries as we were, and had many a year since? But very few can fay on good grounds that they have

made any progress in mortification and holiness; and except it he some conviction, some flash of affection, or fome faint refolution to amend things amifs, what tile hath been made of, or what benefit hath been reaped by many, and that not of the worst fort, by the communion? And therefore, in the next place, let me fay, That it were not unbecoming or unfuitable to the communion, to make this night a night of humiliation before God, and of prayer to him to be delivered from blood guilliness; there is not a more legible evidence of our untenderness, than our being little pricked atthe heart for this fin. A word of reflection from our. neighbour, or the apprehension of some great man's displeasure and feud, hath lien nearer our hearts, than the wronging of the Son of God at this rate, hath done; for which it were good now to cast an eye to "look to him, and to mourn as one mourneth for an only fon; and to go to Zion, weeping as we go, asking the way: thitherward." These are no uncooth or strange things, but fuch as are ordinarily preffed upon us. We are afraid that many have loathed and left the fimple way of godliness, to get and look after some shining and glistering thing to the eye; and that way will never profit them. Take a ferious look of your foul's condition, and be in good earnest in the exercise of repentance, as the life of your preparation; even that ye may come, knowing well what ye need, and what ye are to receive, if we come aright...

The third and main use is, That, seeing there is so great ground to sear communicating unworthily, and that so great judgments follow upon it, it would be, as our fear to communicate unworthily, so our uptaking business, how we may communicate worthily. This is the end of the day, and should be our task and work this night, even to endeavour to be worthy communicants to-morrow. Ye will readily ask, How is such a frame to be attained and come by? I would, for answer, desire you seriously to mind what ye have heard on these words, "Let a man examine himself.

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and fo let him eat : which comprehend the fum of what is called for from you. And we shall now add these four things, that, in your preparing yourselves to communicate rightly and worthily, ye would ferioufly mind; 1. A right uptaking of yourselves. 2. A right uptaking of the ordinance. 3. A right acting in reference to both. 4. A right manner of acting, or a right frame in your going about the work. For the first, We fay, There would be a right uptaking of ourfelves, that we may know what we are, what are our Ens. spiritual wants, and necessities, that we may have some distinct errand to God: this is implied in these words, "Let a man examine himself;" that he may be well acquainted with himself. If there be not some time taken for attaining to a right confideration of ourselves, we cannot come rightly to this ordinance; or if any word comes that fuits our condition, it will come as by guels to us; and we may come to the communion, and neither know what we need, nor what we are feeking, or would be at.

For the fecond, we fay, There would be a right uptaking of the ordinance itself, which, when wanting it mars us, that we know not how to communicate. In the ordinance we should take up the substance of it, the end of it, and how it effectuates the end of it. The substance of the ordinance is Christ Jesus himfelf, who, though he be not bodily, yet he is really prefent in the facrament: his words are not empty words, the figns are not empty figns; but the bread is his body, and the wine is his blood: for if there be a prefence in the word, as he makes it known through his Spirit, by the efficacy of it on the heart; then, in a more special and solemn manner, there is a presence in the facrament, which also he makes tensible to the spiritual senses of the believer. 2dly, The end and use of the ordinance, for which God hath appointed it, would also be rightly taken up; and this is large. It serves for the manifesting of his love in his death till he come again; and this should be a piece of your exercise, to

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discover the love of Christ in it, and to put your faith to exercise on that love; in which respect, Christians have not only their particular cafe to look to in the facrament, but also that their spirits be taken up with the thoughts of the wonderfully condescending love of Christ, who hath given and left behind him a token and memorial of it. And especially these ends would be looked to and confidered, viz. That it is given for instruction; for it gives us a fight of Christ crucified: it shews us the way of making up our union with him, and the necessity of it, and the warrant given us to make use of him. And as it is given for instruction and teaching, fo for fealing and confirming; the Lord would have us thereby know the truth of his promifes and covenant for our greater confolation and that we may with the greater liberty apply them: even as when a prince offers peace to a rebel, and grants him a pardon, to make him the more fure, and to remove all doubts and jealousies, there is a feal appended to the pardon, which confirms it, and confirms quently frengtheneth the faith of the rebel to rest upon it; fo this is a special end of the facrament, to feal and confirm: God having graciously condescended to covenant and promise, and to swear to the truth of his covenant and promife, "that the heirs of promife may have firong confolation;" he also appends feals to in covenant. But, 3dly, We are to confider how it effectuates thefe ends; and thus we are to look on the Sacrament as exhibiting and applying Jefus Christ and his benefits; which must needs be a spiritual and sublime thing, holden out in these words, "Take ye, eat ye; this is my body," &c. Where we have Jefus Christ giving over himself to the believer, so as he and the believer become one, and he hath Christ to feed upon. It is true, there is no phyfical conjunction here: yet, as in the word, the offer and promifes convey Christ holden out in the promises to the foul being received by faith, there is an union thus made up betwist Christ and the person; so, in the right pastaking of the facturent, the Spirit going along with the word and feal, and the believer receiving the teal as given him of God for that end, as well as the word, there results an union and communion, a mystical and spiritual uniting and joining of Christ and the believer together; which, although it doth not always necessarily pre-suppose faith going before, yet it supposes faith necessarily to go along with it. And in this there is most express covenanting and bargaining betwint Christ and the believer, Jesus Christ not giving himself here indefinitely, as he doth in the word and offer of the gospel, but particularly; and thus the believer's faith bath the most distinct ground and reading to make application of him, and so the more distinct confirmation.

mFor the third, There is a right acting in reference to both the former to be looked to. aft, There is formething that our judgment and memory would be taken an with, which is as the key to what follows: we are to remember the Lord's death, the end of it, the love he had in dying, and his instituting of this ordinance when he died for this end, that we might remember hisdeath and love therein till he come again, and have our minds meditating on these. 2dly, There should be an exercise of our graces, as of repentance, from deflecting on ourfelves; of love, from looking to Christ, and of continued spiritual mourning resulting from both; and especially there should be the exercise of faith, as being the main thing that on our part makes up the union, and whereby our communion is entertained. And there is a threefold act of faith called for in worthy communicating: 1. An act receiving. 22. An act giving. 3. A ratifying act, that knits both the acts together. (1.) I fay, an act of faith receiving. Christ's word and ordinance, and himself therein. (2.) An act of faith giving, refigning, or committing burfelves to him: the covenant being in this respect mutual. And, (3.) A ratifying act, coupling or Knitting these together, viz. Christ giving himself to er. 1. with the s the wftid the Ways firpd in ning givword s the reamore 1077 ce to meaken e are love. ance r his have auld. rom mift, rom e of akesnterfor 22. the ving. ein. ting pect

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us, and our giving ourselves to him; his engagement to us, and ours to him. To clear thefe a little further. 1. The receiving act looks to the institution and covenant to which the facrament is appended, and to Chrift. in the words of institution and in the covenant, making offer of himself which is to be considered as in the word and covenant, to which the facrament is appended. And accordingly it welcometh him, as it doth in the word; for, as there is a receiving act of faith as to the word, so there is a receiving act of faith as to the facrament. That is, when the foul is put to dispute, whether the offer of it be made to it. or about the promise that supposes the condition, if it may lay hold upon it; the believing foul's taking of the facrament is the permitting and allowing of itfelf to be confirmed, by virtue of Christ's appointing that ordinance for its confirmation, that the offer is made to it, and that the promise belongs to it in particular: as when a penitent finner comes to the communion, and that promife rolls in his thoughts, " Thy fins and thy iniquities will I remember no more;" and he would fain believe it; the receiving act of faith is to take the facrament as God's putting his feal to that word of promise, that he will make it good to the foul in particular, "Thy fins and thy iniquities will I remember no more." Or when a foul bath its fecret longing after Christ, and cannot dispense with the want of him, cries out, "O! when wilt thou come unto me!" In the facrament it looks on the institution, and takes it as a feal of confirmation, to put it out of queftion that he who hath promised to come, "will come, and will not tarry;" and it looks on Christ giving the communion, as if it faw him taking the pen, and with his own hand fubscribing the contract, and lays it up in its heart as in a charter-cheft, as an evidence and confirmation of its right to Christ. And indeed there is much need of being distinct in this; for there are many who make conscience of engaging to Christ in this ordinance, who look not on it as Christ's engaging to them; but the receiving act of faith looks on it immediately as his engaging to the foul. As a person that hath a hard heart, looking on that promife, Mad will take away the flony heart, and give a heart of flesh (" and expecting the making out of it, takes the fadrament as a feal that he will perform that promife because he articles so with him to get that promife made good; even as a man that would have forme debateable clause in his right to such a piece of land cleared and put out of question, brings it to his Superior to get it sealed of new. Now, this receiving act of faith doth not only dispose and fit us to receive from God; but as the hand takes or receives the elements, to faith receives God's offer of the covenant, and that which is represented and fealed up in that orsinance. 2. The act of faith giving, is (as I faid) that whereby we give ourselves away to Christ; and so, as we get one right, we give, as it were, another; or, as--we take one hand, we give another. We receive Chrift engaged to us according to the covenant, and twe engage and give outfelves away to be his. Our very receiving Supposeth our confenting, and faith's delivering and giving up itself or the person to Christ, and taking Christ to it, or to himself; so making, as it were, an exchange. O wonderful exchange, by which we receive infinitely more and better than we give." When the foul hath gotten him, it gives itself to him, to be changed and made better, and renews its purpoles, resolutions, and promises to that end, and takes the facrament to make thefe fecure. 3. The ratifying act of faith is this, when we have taken Christ's promife by faith, and have given our promise to him, and furrendered and delivered up ourselves unto him, and we go about the communion, and exercise our faith to get both confirmed; as we use to speak, " We will take our facrament on it;" we take the communion to feal his part of the covenant to us, and to confirm ourselves as to the performance of that which we have engaged to him; and thus that which was before

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a bond on Christ's side, and a bond and engagement on our side, becomes now a mutual contract and bargain; both are put in one, and compled together, sealed with one seal, and made use of for both these ends. The believer thinks himself surer of God's promise, and himself more securely engaged to God; and though this engaging had no new promise in it, yet thereby the more explicitly is our duty brought forth, and the promise more particularly becomes ours.

As for the fourth and last thing, It is a right manner of acting, or a right way and fuitable frame in our going about this ordinance, which takes in feveral things, as, 1. Fear, because it is a very difficult thing rightly to communicate, and we had need to fear left we mistake and miscarry. 2. Distinctness and clearnels, which is a part of the refult of felf-examination: we would at least be so far clear in our condition, as to know and be convinced that the general firain of our way hath not been right, as it should have been, by very far, when we cannot fo well find out and condescend upon the particular evils that we have been given to, or have done; and though we know not all nor many of the particular promises of the covenant, yet we should be clear in that general, that in the covenat God maketh over himself a God all-sufficient to the believer. 3. Faith in, and dependence on God for preparation, and for a fultable frame for gaining new ground over corruptions, for more humility and tenderness, for more thorough turning to the Lord; "Convert me, (fays Ephraim, Jerl xxxi.) and I shall be converted." There should be many serious and fincere refolutions, engagements, and purpoles, and much heart-melting and prayer in the making of them; as it was with Ifrael and Judah, Jer. k. c. whofe great defire and defign was, to have the covenant betwirt God and them to fecured, that it might hold perpetually, and never any more be forgotten; they defired to keep (as we use to speak) no hank in their own hand, they

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allow of no refervations or exceptions, and they go about this great work praying and weeping. This were a fweet and faitable frame for a communion, also notably well becoming a people that approach to the Lord's table; and we feriously commend it to you, and you to the grace of God in the practice of these things, which his own blessed Self make forthcoming to you.

SERMONII.

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A Preparation Sermon for the Communion.

On 1 Cor. xi. 29. Not discerning the Lord's body.

Plant made was discussed in his many him dies at 1960. It is a very great and grave, a very momentous and concerning work, rightly to partake of the facrament of the Lord's supper; it hath as many and great advantages attending the due and worthy participation thereof, and as many fad confequences following the unworthy participation of it, as any other of all the ordinances of Christ hath: and therefore, when the apostle hath sharply expostulated with the Christian Corinthians for feveral abuses in reference to this ordinance, he proceeds, after a full declaration of its institution, to guard them against all after abuse thereof, and to fit and prepare them for fuitable and worthy communicating; and the first direction that he gives them is in reference to the preceding preparation, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." The second is in reference to the action itself, teaching them to communicate worthily, fo as they may differn the Lord's body, by holding out the danger of unworthy communicating a both which he knits together, telling them, that if any of these things be wanting, it will bring on judgment. Whence in a word, and but in passing, we may observe these two things. r. That a man will never communicate worthily, that doth not beforehand endeavour to prepare himself for it; and therefore he prefixed this, "Let a man examine himself," and then subjoins, "And so let him eat." 2. That a man that is not distinct in discerning himself in some measure after the examination of himself, will never aright discern the Lord's body in this ordinance of the communion: he that takes not up himself, will never take up Christ rightly.

In the words more particularly, we have three great things in reference to present communicating: the first whereof is, the great and peculiar use of the communion, and that is, that it makes the Lord's body discernable, it puts Christ in a capacity (to speak so) to be taken up and discerned. The second is, the great duty of a worthy communicant, and that is, rightly to discern the Lord's body so holden forth. The third is, the great sin that unworthy communicants fall into, and that is, They do not discern the Lord's body; but are like so many dogs and swine, who not knowing what delicates are there, they go about the action, not knowing what they are doing.

The first is clear, That in the facrament Christ's Jesus's broken body is made discernible to us; else he would not find fault with them who come, and do not discern it. The words also before ver. 24. clear it; "This, saith he, is my body which is broken for you." So chap. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And the sharp judgments that come on people for not discerning the Lord's body, and so for being guilty of communicating unworthily, do shew that not only is our Lord's body really present, but in a special manner discernible in this ordinance.

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fs H) To clear this a little further, we shall, it. Permit a swefold distinction; and then, 2. Answer a few questions that serve for clearing the doctrine, and for better

uptaking of this ordinance.

First then, We should distinguish betwixt these two, viz. Looking on the sacrament as strictly taken, and as contradistinguished from the word; and looking on it as more complexly taken, as including the word. It is in the last sense that we consider the sacrament here, viz. as taking in, 1. Christ signified and represented by the elements 2. The word and covenant to which the sacrament, as a seal, is appended; therefore the cup is called, "The Cup of the New Testament."

3. The seal of the sacrament itself, appended to the word and covenant.

2. We thould distinguish betwixt Christ's broken body considered as discernible to our understanding only, and the same considered as it is discernible to our very fenfes, or as it is apprehensible, when by feeling we may grip it, as it were, and not only look to it, but take hold of it: (how this is, shall be more particularly explained and cleared afterward, for preventing of mistakes:) it is in this last sense that we understand discernible here, not excluding the former; so that Christ's broken body in the facrament is not only made discernible to the understanding of the right communicant, but he is made communicable and apprehenfible; and there is an union with him attainable in that ordinance. And what we faid before proves this; he holds out his body to be received, and he is received in it.

As for the second, to wit, the questions to be answered; they are these four. 1. In what respect is Christ present and discernible in the sacrament? 2. To what is he made discernible and communicable? 3. How the sacrament makes him discernible, and what way it holds him out as discernible to us? 4. What may be the reasons why Christ holds out himself, his broken body, as discernible to us in the sacrament?

rift, Then, In what respect is Christ present and discernible in the sacrament? We answer, 1. Not fimply confidered as he is the Son of God, nor in respect of any benefit from him as Mediator, neither simply as Redeemer; but he is holden out as incarnate; and so this facrament differs from the Jews paffover, which held him out as to come, while this holds him out as come. 2. It holds him out, not only as become man, but as fuffering, as having his body broken. 3. He is made discernible in respect of the end for which he fuffered, and had his body broken, and his blood shed: "This is, saith he, my body which was broken for you; this cup is the new tellament in my blood, shed for the remission of the fins of many:" to wit, of all the elect. It holds out Christmediator, God-man fuffering for us. 4. It holds him out as communicable, and in capacity to be participated of by us; therefore it is called "the communion of his body," chap. x. 16. to tell us, that we may be united to him, and made to share of him; and we are bidden to take and eat, and all to drink of it. These last two look to the covenant, and hold out the facra. ment in reference to it, and how our Lord Jefus, first by his fufferings, was to purchase a people to himself, and fecondly that he was to be communicable to his people; therefore the cup is called "the New Cover mant in his blood." The cup and covenant go together; for though we may consider Christ without the facrament, yet we cannot fo well confider the facrament without Christ and the covenant:

adly, To what is Christ made discernible and communicable? We answer, 1. He is not discernible nor present after a corporal manner to the bodily eye, though he be really and truly present. The bread that he gives is his body, and the cup his blood; and yet it was bread and wine which was given, and not his body and blood corporally. 2. He is not present and communicable by any local mutation, by taking us up to heaven to him, or by bringing his body out

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of heaven to us; but he is these three ways present and communicable, (1.) To our spiritual senses, to an enlightened understanding, which considers Christ's body broken, and his blood flied. (2.) To the faith of his people he is present in his own ordinance: when his Spirit goes along, and quickens their hearts, and their faith is in exercise, they are made to apprehend Christ's body, and to have an union with him sitting in glory, as really as they partake of the elements with their hand, and feed upon them with their mouth and fromach; an union as real as is betwirt the head and the members, and betwixt the root and the branches. These two, the Spirit on Christ's side, and faith on our fide, make up a real union; and therefore, though this presence be real, yet it is spiritual: faith, looking and going through the elements, takes up Christ according to the end appointed, and this makes the union: even as faith will look and go through the word, and, crediting the word, takes up Christ in it, and makes an union with him; fo, by virtue of this ordinance, there is a spiritual presence of and union with Christ Jesus. (3.) A presence to sense, not so much in respect of inward feeling, as in respect of the powerful effects of his presence, though often inward feeling goes along with it; and therefore it is called "the communion of his body," and "the wine of heaven." And in respect of the mean and way he manifests himself therein, to the eye, to the touch, to the tafte, and to the ear; and there is a colour fenfible; which is more than is in any other ordinance, where there is but the exercise of one sense; for, the more of the outward fenfes he makes use of, he brings with him a proportionable bleffing to the inward fenfes of the foul and a strange where there and an alcomed

discernible to us? For answer, I shall offer these four ways, how he may be present to the faith of the believer in the sacrament; all which ways he is made discernible: 1. In respect of the institution; for Christ is

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here represented by the ministen as giving himself; him authority and warrant is here, therefore himfelf is here. This, though it be common to all Christ's ordinances! yet it belongs in a peculiar way to this ordinances for in it he is prefent in a special manner, making over himself and his sufferings to us. 2. He is made discernible in the facrament, in as far-as it represents him: and though the word holds him out yet the facrament more fully, clearly, and fenfibly, by fuch and fuch figns; by bread, and bread broken, reprefenting his body broken by fuffering; by wine, and wine poured out, representing his blood fied; and by wine distinct from the bread, to shew a most true and real death: in which respect, it is said, "Do this in remembrance of me;" and, "As often as ye cat this bread, and drink this cup, ye flew forth the Lord's death till he come again." Every facrament reprefents Christ, but this represents him in his suffering and dying, and in the end of it, and makes it over to the worthy communicant. 3. He is made differnible by this facrament, in this respect, as it is a seal appended and affixed to the covenant, ferving to ratify and confirm the promifes contained in the covenant; and so the bread and wine, considered in reference to the inflitution, are a real confirmation of our real partaking of the thing fignified, and in some respect make Christ really present. As the giving of a sealed charter of a house to a man is the giving him the house 4: or, as the giving of infeftment by a bit of earth ex stone (being a legal confirmation) is the giving of that land to the man, wherein he is infeft; because as I faid, it is a legal right to it, and makes it present and discernible to him : even to Christ is made discernible in this ordinance, because we have our right to him, which is in the word, in a fpecial manner confirmed to us in it; for not only doth this (as other facraments do) confirm the word and covenant in general, but it bath this peculiar to it, that it confirms Christ's making over his dying felf to us. 4. Christ is here pre-

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fent and difcernible, and made fo by this ordinance, if we confider the facrament as a mean whereby we have Christ communicated to us. He not only makes over himself covenant-ways, but sealeth his gift; and the facrament is a mean of communion with him thus made over to us. In which respect the believer doth and may warrantably make use of the facrament for his quickening, elevating, and strengthening, to cleave closer, and to grip faster to Christ: for which cause it is called so the communion of his body ?" and hereby we are faid to be made " one body with him." Not but that without the facrament it may be, and is often To; but by the factament this union and communion is strengthened and furthered to the faith and spiritual charles of any trail. Sense of the believer.

athly. What are the reasons why Christ will have his broken body made thus difcernible and apprehenfible in the facrament? We answer. That he will have it fo, for these reasons, 1. For evidencing of, and bearing testimony to, his great love to his people: it fays that a dwing Christ so loves us, that he gave himself to us; and fo the memory of his death is revived and kept up. He will have his dying felf in a facrament bestowed on his people, to keep his love still fresh to them in their remembrance. 2. For the public profeffing and teftifying our faith in a dying Saviour; for in this facrament we profess our faith in him, and dependence on him; and we fay thereby, and declare to the world, This my Saviour died, and is able to give me life; which is a piece of honour and glory to the Mediator, and a part of our duty, when we give public testimony, that we think shame of a crucified Redeemer. 27 The Lord hath, for the edification or benefit of his people, made himfelf fo discernible in this facrament; and there is a fourfold edification or benefit that redounds to them by it. (1.) Instruction; for they that cannot fo well take up the Lord in the word, may be formewhat helped to take him up in the facramentias a flain Saviour tatid as being as needful

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as meat and drink, without which, as we cannot live. no more can we live without him: and O how many spiritual lessons may be had by these significant ceremonies instituted by Christ! (2.) There is here edification unto the faith of God's people; and thus it becomes strengthening, when not only Christ says in his word, "I have loved my church, and given myfelf for here" and, " They that believe shall not perish:" but we have this ordinance fealing this but is rexceedingly strengthening to a poor weak doubting body; which could not easily believe that Christ would be fo kind to a rebel; when he gets a facred feal of his kindness, it helps him to believe what is promised . It edifies, as it ferves to promote the inward growth of grace; for in the facrament Christ is communicated; and, as he is communicated, life is communicated, love is communicated, love to God and to one another is communicated: and, in a word, we cannot imagine a communication of Christ, but it brings with it strengthening to the inward man. 4 There is edification in respect of the believer's consolation, whether as to his fense, or as to his faith. The gospel in its offer and promifes comes out, and fave. Men and women, be it known to you, that Christ is preached to you, and remission of fine through him; but the facrament says, Believing man and woman, there is my body, not only broken for all the elect in general, but for thee in particular. And this much filenceth the great debate whether I be elected or not, or within the covenant or not; for it fays, O man, here is a flain and broken Redeemer made over unto thee fee then that thou close with him in the covenant, as he offers himfelf: and fo, when there has been some wavering and fainting in respect of consolation before, it proves very firengthening to the believer's confolation, confidering the nature of the ordinance; and, in this respect, the facrament is as a love-token of a kind husband to his foote, who, when he is to remove to fome confiderable diffance from her for a time, favs, Take and

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keep this in remembrance of me, and think that I dearly love thee, and will not forget thee, till we meet

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The fecond point of doctrine is the great duty called for from a worthy communicant; and that in short is, rightly to discern the Lord's body made so discernible, and as he is made discernible. The text confirms the doctrine: for, though a man had never so many good things; suppose that he had not only gifts, but grace, yea, and a holy frame of spirit; yet, if he be ignorant of what he is called to, or a doing in this ordinance, he cannot discern the Lord's body, and so cannot communicate worthily. Hence it is, that there is so much need of knowledge, without which, a man can no more than a child or a fool rightly take up. Christ in the sacrament.

To open this a little, we shall speak a word to these three, .. The object to be discerned. 2. To the act of discerning. 3. To the reasons why this discerning.

is fo necessary a duty.

sit, For the object to be discerned: it is Christ Jefus suffering, dying, and making over himself to his
people according to this covenant; it is Christ, and yet
Christ dying, and Christ dying according to the covenant, from which he can never be separated: and
especially in this ordinance in particular, considered
in its end and institution with respect to the covenant, it is Christ giving himself, and in this sacrament,
according to the covenant.

ways, the last whereof is the main. 1. To discern a thing, in scripture, is to have distinct thoughts and apprehensions concerning it; it is to take up a thing simply and as it is in itself. Thus to discern Christ present in the sacrament, is to discern how and wherefore he is present. 2. To discern a thing, is to disference it from other things; and, in this respect, a thing is said to be discerned comparatively, as 1 Cor. iv. 7. "Who maketh thee to differ from another?"

Thus, to differn this facrament, and Christ in it, is to difference it from other things; confidering that it was price common bread and wine, but that now it is not fo. It is to put a difference betwixt the facrament and common bread and wine, and betwixt the facrament and the word and covenant, ver has respect to the covenant, as the feals differ from the charter: and to difference this facrament from other facraments. in respect that it looks to a dving Saviour, and communicates him and his benefits that way. 2. To difcern a thing, is to have a high efteem of it; fuch as was the differning of meats, days, and places in to to discern Christ in this ordinance, is to have a deep inpression and high estimation of Jesus Christ, of his death, and of his matchless love shining therein; to have much spirituality, holy fear, awe, and reverence, in reference to him? Such a fear and reverence as mean men will have before a king or a great man, who, when they carry not fuitably before fuch a great person, we will say to them, Know ve where you are? So the right discerning and uptaking of Christ here, is to have a high estimation of him. 4. There is a complex discerning of a thing in reference to its use and end : or we may call it a relative difcerning, which is practical, when a man conforms himself suitably to his differning of the thing; the want whereof our Lord reproves in the Jews, "Hypocrites, (favs he) ye can differn the face of the fky, but ye cannot differn the figns of the times." And, in this respect also, when a man carries unfuitably before a magistrate, it is faid to him by differning persons, Know ye where you are? And, this being the main thing here implied, we shall speak a little more to it, wherein these two things are supposed: (1) Some distinct uptaking of ourselves, of our need, and of our hazard. (2.) The right uptaking of Christ in this ordinance, as to the supply of those necessities, and preventing of that hazard. And this doctrinal discerning goeth before that which is practical, which is a man's fuitably making

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use of Christ, or suitably exercising himself in reference to his need, and that ordinance appointed to supply all his need by Jefus Christ; which is with a reflex look, fometimes on himself, fometimes on Christ. And there are in this thefe five steps, which follow one of them upon another. t. It confifts in a fuitable frame of heart, as becomes fuch a poor, finful, unworthy, and needy person in the presence of so holy a Lord, going about fuch a holy action; another frame than is called for at our dinner or supper, or at ordinary hearing the word, or at prayer. A holy, humble, cheerful, ferious, hungry, and heavenly frame: holy awe and respect to God, making humble; faith of God's goodness and rich grace in Christ shining in this ordinance, making cheerful; the conviction of need, making fober, and yet very ferious and eager in what he is about. It is a frame made up, as it were, of contrarieties; ardent love and zeal, and yet a calm and composed spirit to hear what God says, to take what he gives, and to behold what he manifests. 2. It confifts in an exercise of the mind in meditation, both in reference to ourselves and to Christ: meditation in reference to our own finfulness and milery, and meditation on Christ's love, calling to mind all that he hath done, thinking with delight on Christ's fuffering, and on the end of it; and again reflecting a look on ourselves, to keep life in this meditation. What was I when he suffered and did all this for me? and what am I now, when he is offering this to me? To have the picture of a loving hufband hanging by a wife, to what purpose is it, and for what use doth it serve, if she never look on it to mind him whom it represents? q. It confists in an exercise of grace, it is even (as it is faid in the Song) a making of all the spices to cast forth their smell; and the putting of all things in good order, and studying to have them in good case: it is to have love warm to the Giver, and cloting with the gift of a dying Saviour; and to have love warm to others of his people for his fake, and

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because he hath taken us in with others, to partake of the benefits of his love thining in his death: for love to the head and members go together. It is to have repentance lively firred up, and fin made heart-pricking, and godly forrow to flow; the heart made to loath fin, and the mind exercised in forming hearty resolutions, purpoles, vows, and engagements against it. But it is especially to have faith stirred up and in exercife, and to have all the fenfes of faith (to speak fo) fet agoing: as when the word comes out, and favs, "Take ye, eat ye; this is my body which is broken for you:" faith beholds and gets as clear and fatisfying a view of Christ's suffering and dving, as if the man faw him with his bodily eyes: when the hand is firetched out to take, faith acts proportionably, in Aretching out its hand to take Christ; and not only grips him, but in this ordinance, and according to the end of it, takes it as a pledge of Christ performing what he hath promised, making use of him for the end appointed. When the eye looks on what is done, faith is confidering and taking a view of Christ, and of the covenant, and of the benefits purchased by him; and fees another thing than the elements, even the wakened-up fword of the Father's justice pursuing the Mediator, as the elects cautioner. When the eye looks on the distribution, faith sees Christ made, as it were, believers common good given among them, and to every one of them. When the hand puts the bread and wine to the mouth, faith hath a way of opening its mouth, and, as it were, chewing and feeding upon Jesus Christ, and of strengthening, refreshing, and cheering itself in him; counting itself well come to with him, and fecure in him; and fattening its engagements to him: all which strengthen our spiritual life, as eating and drinking doth the natural life. And then, when it comes to the tafte. Christ relisheth more fweetly to the believer, so that no wine doth cheer the natural heart fo much as Christ in the facrament, confidered in his love and covenant, and in the benefit

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that come by him, does the foul of the believer; faith here considers Christonoto only communicable, but as actually communicated of The fourth thing wherein this discerning confists, is a reflecting exercise: when we have received the facrament, we are to reflect and confider what we have done, and what we are doing. Are we indeed feeding upon Christ? What is this in our hands? This bread in fome respects is not bread, but Christo this cup is not wine, but " the cup of the new testament in his blood." And, by the reflex act, the believer applies, and confirms himfelf; having received the facrament, whereby his union with Christ is fignified and fealed up, he applies, and fays within himself, Now Christ is mine, and I am his. And he confirm himself in Christ's love to himself, and in his interest in him : how, faith he, I have gotten no deluson, but the fign and feal of his bleffed body broken, and of his blood fhed for me. If unbelief fay, Have ye gotten Christ indeed? Yes, fays the believer's faith, having got this pledge of his love, I have gotten himfelf, and I should believe it. And this is to act on Christ, not only directly, which is a thing common to the facrament with the word, but to act on Christ resexly, and to perfuade ourfelves of our union and communion with him, which is the end of this ordinance; else we take not up Christ as giving a seal. Therefore the word is, "Take, eat; this is my body broken for you?" there is more than a bare fign here, And faith acis, not only for receiving, but for consming itself that by receiving it hath an union and communicativith him, who is holden out in the facrament; for, if it be a feat, and exhibit Christ as a feal, then faith should receive and act on it as such, for attaining the end that a feal should have, suppose ing the condition to proceed. . It confifts in an act of spiritual affecting, when there is a hely smacking (to fpeak fo) and kiffing of Christ, the foul digesting him for the life of the inner-man, and therein delighting, rejoining, and exulting in him: and to the faith,

confidence, and hope of the believer are strengthened; which makes him that he is not ashamed; and upon the back of this ordinarily the love of God is shed abroad in the beart. 'And though there should be little fensible feeling, yet the believer finds himself obliged to cheer himself in Christ, and in the covenant, and in the benefits that he hath through his pur chafe; and there is readily fome warming of love to Christ, and he is confirmed in the faith of the love of Christ to him: and it is impossible, where these two are, but some holy tickling of affections, which flow from the word, and from this ordinance thus rightly gone about, (as has been faid) will follow; and if this be not, that is, if Christ be not thus discerned in the facrament, (1.) God gets not what he calls for, Christ's death is not rightly minded, his glory and our edification are not promoted. Nor, (2.) Is the end of the facrament attained. Neither, (3.) Is our comfort furthered; for it is not the ordinance barely, or ordinary bread and wine fet apart for a holy use, but Jesus Christ discerned and received in the ordinance, that comforts; otherwise the ordinance in and by itself will not promote our comfort and growth.

The third doctrine is, That it is, though a very common and rife, yet a very great fin, not to discern the Lord's body, as he is holden out in this facrament discernible. The greatness of which may be easily gathered from what we have discoursed concerning the great privilege of the discernibleness of the Lord's body therein; from the horridness of the guilt that it involves in, even the guilt of the body and blood of the Lord, the greatest and most horrid of all blood guiltiness; and from the dreadful judgments and plagues that follow on it, temporal or bodily, and spiritual plagues, yea, even eternal damnation, if repentance through grace prevent not. But we must, because of the shortness of time, leave all that might be spoken in the more particular profecution of this doctrine; and shall only give you two or three caveats (wherewith t

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shall close) to guard against mistakes in reference to what hath been spoken. I know it will readily be faid, If this be difcerning of the Lord's body, and if none other do difcern it but fuch as go about thefe things, it will be hard for any to difcern it. For anfwer to this, I would have you to consider, 1. That there is a more explicit, distinct, and perfect discerning; and a more implicit, confused, and indistinct discerning of the Lord's body: if we speak of perfection in difcerning, who come up to that? but if we speak of an honest sincere way of aiming to difcern, though it be somewhat indistinct and confused, that may be won at; yea, I would not think them in a good condition that rest satisfied with themfelves, as being diffinct enough in all these things whereof we have spoken: yet, where there is (as I just now faid) honest aiming at these things, though in a confused and indistinct way, where faith and love are in some measure acting, with a fort of fear and joy mixed together; when there is a fear to profane the ordinance, and yet the foul loves it fo well, that it cannot endure to want it, nor Christ in it; there is a discerning of the Lord's body, that warrants to draw near. 2. Confider, that there is a general confusion, and a particular confusion (to speak so) in going about this ordinance. The general confusion is this, when persons are so very ignorant and confused, that they know not at all what they are doing; a particular confusion is only in some respect, that is, when a foul knoweth that Jefus Christ is in the ordinance. and knoweth its own condition to stand in need of him, that it hath many spiritual wants to be supplied, and that there is much good and a supply of all those wants to be had from Christ in this ordinance; but how to come at it thereby, it knows not so well nor fo distinctly. A person that is confused in the general, cannot difcern the Lord's body in the facrament; but one that is confused in a particular, may: and though fuch an one cannot, it may be, pitch on a parneular promise that suits his need, vet he may fix on

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Christ, and on the covenant in general, which is one of the main things that faith acts on; and indeed, un. less himself be acted on by faith, his benefits fail: and though a ferious foul cannot get a particular promife to fettle on, we fay it should stick by the covenant in general, as including all particulars. 3. Confider, that discerning is not to be aftricted to the very instant of receiving, but we should look well what is our aim and endeavour alongst the action; and, if habitually we be indeed ferroufly feeking after and purfuing these things, we cannot have them all in our thoughts at once; that is scarce, if at all, possible. But if the aim and strain of your foul's exercise run this way, and though there be failing in many things, yet this is not a neglective flighting and careless in confideration. In a word, see if there hath been, 1. Some clear convic. tion of fin, and of your great need of Christ. And, 2. See if there hath been some uptaking of Christ in the ordinance, and he made precious and lovely, therein, in fome measure; and that it was your errand, in going to that ordinance, to take Christ to supply your need, and take away your fin, and your aim to go about the ordinance rightly in order to that end; if the strain and series of your way in these hath been honest and fincere, ye have no reason to account yourselves (at least altogether) unworthy communicants: though, when we have done all that we can do, it is God himself who must enable us rightly to discern the Lord's body, and who will graciously pass by many things that will be found amifs in us; according to good king Hezekiah's prayer, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to feek God, though he be not cleanfed according the purification of the fanctuary." So must we fay, The good Lord pardon us, though we difcern and take not up Christ's body with that faith and love, with that distinctness and clearness, with that delight, cheerfulness, and joy that become, and are requisite for such a folemn action.

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SERMON III.

Preached immediately before the COMMUNION.

SALVANDAL IN THE PARTY OF

On MATTH. XXII. 4.

-All things are ready : come to the marriage.

There are many great and glorious things spoken of the gospel; and our blessed Lord Jesus hath made use of many good similitudes, wonderfully apposite, to set it out: sometimes it is called "the kingdom of heaven," for reasons that we will not now insist upon; sometimes it is called a marriage, as here and elsewere. Some of these similitudes shew what great and singular satisfaction is to be had in it; therefore it is compared to a feast, supper, and dinner. Some of them shew the way how we are made partakers of it; so opening and receiving holds forth believing: and some of those similitudes hold forth both, as this of a marriage, which points at the strait union betwixt Christ and believers, and at the manner or way of our entering into this blessed union, on which follows communion.

We need not insist in opening the words, which are plain; we shall only say these two words, to make way for observations: the first whereof shall be, to shew that the scope of the parable is not to hold forth people coming to the ordinances or the sacraments only or mainly; but their coming to Christ Jesus himself, and to the fat things in the ordinances. Many come to the ordinances, who come not to Christ and to the seast; that which is called for here is a real closing with Christ, and an accepting of him for our husband

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on his own terms. The fecond word is, to shew, that though the ordinances be neither the marriage nor the feast; yet it is by the ordinances that the marriage is furthered, and the feast prepared and made ready; for faith takes Christ in the word, and strikes hands with him in the sacrament: when he saith in the word, "Be thou for me, and I will be for thee;" faith saith, Content, Lord. And when he saith in the sacrament, Take; faith saith, Welcome, with all my heart; he be-

ing there as well as he is in the word.

These two things being premised, we shall, 1. At once and together propose some observations from the words. 2. We shall clear and confirm them. And then, 3. We shall insist in the application of all jointly. The observations are these, first, That in the gospel there is a clear and manifest making up of a marriage betwixt Christ and souls. The preaching of the gospel is like a man's making of a marriage for his son. The fecond is, That this marriage is the most excellent marringe that ever was: therefore it is called, "The marriage of the king's fon." The third is, That before this marriage can be brought about and accomplished, there are many things to be made ready. The fourth is, That, where the gospel comes, all things are made ready for fouls cloting with Christ in this marriage. The fifth is, That the Master of the feast, the King, God the Father, and the King's Son, the Bridegroom, are not only content and willing, but very defirous to have finners come to the marriage: they would fain (to speak so with reverence) have poor fouls espoused to Christ. The fixth is, That, when the Master sends out his servants in his name, their great work is to invite to the wedding, and to close the mar-The seventh is, That, when people are invited to this marriage, it is their duty, and greatly of their concern, to come. The eighth is, That all they that come may expect a very hearty welcome; therefore they are invited once and again. And if we compare this text with Luke xiv. we will find there, that the

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Master orders his servants to compel them that are invited to come in.

All these observations are very obvious in the words; and if the Lord would graciously please to help us to speak, and you to hear, as they are not impertinent to our present purpose, so they might be made very edifying, strengthening, refreshing, and comfortable to us.

We shall, in the second place, a little more particularly clear and confirm every one of them. The first was. That there is a marriage betwixt Christ and fouls, held forth and made offer of in this gospel. We take this for granted: for here is the King's Son, and some bidden to his marriage, and those that are bidden are not worthy: they are all professors and members of the visible church; the scope of the parable being to shew that the offer of this marriage was first made to the Jews, and again renewed to them, and then from them it came to the Gentiles. I shall, in passing, give you a little bint of the nature of this marriage in these four: 1. There is by this gospel a real union made up betwixt Christ and the souls of believers: which union is not with the ordinances, nor with fense, nor with the benefits which flow from Christ; but with Christ himself primarily and principally; and it is so pear a tie, and very close, that it is preferred unto, and goeth beyond the union that is betwixt the husband and wife, Eph. v. 30. "We are (fays the apostle) members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Where, alluding to that union betwixt man and wife, he not only makes the union real, but makes the one much straiter than the other. 2. The nature of this union is fuch, that it is mutual; the Bridegroom hath in a manner (to freak fo, with reverence of his Majefty) no power over himfelf, when he is married unto the bride; and the bride hath no power over herself, but the bridegroom: fo that here there is a fort of mutual up-giving of the bridegroom to the bride, and of the bride to the bridegroom; according to those wonderfully condeteending words, Hofea iii. 3. " Thou fhalt

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not be for another, to will I also be for thee?" The Lord hath believers under a peculiar tie to him. and he hath tied himself peculiarly to them, so that (if we may speak thus) neither of them is master of themfelves. The Lord Jefus doth some way account himfelf not to be master of himself, he is so engaged to them to be theirs and for them, and cannot but be anfwerable to his engagement; and they are obliged to be no more masters of themselves, but to be absolutely and altogether at his disposing. 3. This union is made up by mutual confent of parties, and the confent must be willing. His consent comes in his word; he fays from thence, " De old, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man-will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will fup with him. and he with me." I come, as if he had faid, in my gospel to woo; and, if any will consent to take me on the terms on which I offer myfelf, I will be theirs. The foul's confent is given by faith in his word, which is called, John i. 12. "Receiving of him," and is relative to the offer. The offer is indeed backed and quickened by the Spirit, without which it would never be received; yet notwithstanding, that which our faith lays hold on, is not the Spirit, but the word quickened by the Spirit. 4. Confider here the effects that follow immediately and instantly on this marriage-union: Christ, with all that is his, becomes ours, and we, with all that is ours, become his: our debt is imputed to him, he is liable to it, and must pay it, and provide for us, and be our head and hufband; and his righteoufness, the purchase of his death and fufferings, viz. justification, fanctification, his Spirit, grace and glory, and every good thing that he hath, become ours; and at length the bride is taken into the king's ivory palaces.

The fecond observation was, "That this is a most honourable, noble, and excellent marriage:" the like whereof never was, nor never shall be, from Adam to the end of the world. It is "with the King's Son,

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with the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Heir of all things, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, who was before all things, and by whom all things confift," O! is there any match like this! Is there any fo great and fo noble at he? Is there any in this world whom ye can marry, that is so rich as he? They that marry him, shall " inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. We may clear it a little further from five or fix particulars in the text. 1. It is an excellent and honourable marriage, in respect of the Bridegroom, who is (as has been hinted) the King's Son; who hath not another natural Son. He is the "only begotten of the Father." There is not another Mediator: he is the Father's equal and fellow; fo that if (if we may put an if to it) the Father be great and glorious, so is he; for he is God, the same God equal with the Father in power and glory; "the wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." This marriage is excellent and honourable, in respect of the bride's Father-in-law, (fo to speak) he is the King: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have all a hand in it; and the believer, married to Christ, is daughter-in-law to the great God, ingrafted some way into the same flock, allied with the same family, 2 Cor. vi. 18. "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my fons and daughters, faith the Lord Almighty." 3. It is excellent and honourable, in respect of the preparation made for it. There was never fuch a wedding-feaft: the dinner is prepared, the oxen and fatlings killed: but you will fay, What is all that? Even Jesus Christ himself, he is that " bread indeed, that drink indeed, the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined." The Bridegroom is (to fay fo) the chief dish that the believer feeds and lives upon for ever; and the spiritual blessings and benefits, that are gotten in him and from him, are as so many dishe of this feast, such as righteousness, pardon of sin, peace, and friendship with God, the Spirit, adoption, fancti-

fication, joy in the Holy Ghost, grace and glory, the hope of a room in those mansions that are in his Father's house, of a feat with him at his table and on his throne; even a share in his whole purchase: and is not that a feast? 4. It is honourable and excellent, in respect of its most noble rife, viz. from all eternity, in the bosom of the Father. It bred (to say so) in the King's breast before the foundation of the world was laid: the covenant of redemption was then concluded, and the contract of marriage there drawn, and the bleffed project of it then laid down: " Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not defire: (faith the Mediator, Pfal. xl.) mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offerings nor fin-offerings thou haft not required. Then faid I, Lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." The Father gives so many to the Son to be redeemed, of whom he willingly, readily, and cheerfully accepts, and offers to fatisfy for them, which in due time he doth. 5. It is excellent and honourable in this respect, that there was never such a concurrence of so many and so great things to commend and further a marriage as there is in this. Such as the making of the world, men, and angels; the incarnation of Christ, or his coming into the world; his preaching, and working of miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine; his fuffering and dying, rifing and afcending; his giving ministers and their gifts: and, to make up the marriage-union, the Spirit from heaven coming along with the word, and working faith in the foul; by which bonds, Christ and the believer are joined together: Christ, by his Spirit, apprehending the believer, and the believer apprehending Christ by faith. Was there ever a marriage-contract or union bound up betwixt two fuch vaftly and infinitely distant parties? was there ever fuch honour and riches attending and following a match: fuch righteoufness, remission of fin, adoption, peace with God, joy of the Holy Ghoff, the Spirit, holiness in the beginning, and gradual advances of it: fellowship and walking with God, the

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white stone, the new name, the throne, the crown, grace, and glory, every thing that is good for the bride here, and glory in heaven: in a word, Jesus Clrift, and all the benefits of his purchase? Were there ever fuch easy terms and conditions? It is only, "come to the wedding:" when the King comes awooing, let him be welcomed with your heart's confent: when he fays, "I am content to marry you," let your hearts fay, "Amen, Lord Jefus, I am content to marry thee, and to be for thee, and for none other." And, may not I add, Was there ever fuch fecurity and confirmation given of any marriage? It is confirmed by the death of the Bridegroom, he hath fealed his testament with his blood, and there is no annulling nor altering of a man's testament when he is dead: and our Lord Jesus, who was once dead, is now alive, and lives for evermore; he will never die again, nor make another testament. O beloved hearers, all this is to let you fee that our Lord is in earnest, and very willing to espouse you; and indeed it shall not be his fault if it be not a bargain. And, if it be indeed a bargain betwixt your fouls and him, it is very rare and rich one! O the many rare, excellent, noble, notable, and nonfuch privileges and advantages that attend this marriage, and are to be enjoyed by the foul espoused to Christ! even God and Christ, grace and glory, and all that is comprehended under these, belongs to that foul. We must here be filent, lest in fpeaking of them we darken them by words; here is an abyss and bottomless depth, ready, as it were, to swallow up words. We confess, we can tell but very little what they are; nay, if all the ablest and holiest ministers on earth, and all the angels in heaven, were joined together, they could not to the full, by very far, tell what an excellent match and marriage this is, even to be matched with the Son of God; and yet this privilege and honour have all the faints, all believers, to whom he is wonderful and precious, though alas! not as he ought to be. There is a day

coming, when we shall know to satisfaction, "that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and that believers are in Christ, and he in them." We shall then know the now inexpressible and inconceivable advantages of this marriage, "when he shall come to be glorisied in his saints, and wondered at in all them that believe:" and till that day the one half will never be told us.

The third observation was, "That there are many things to be removed out of the way, and to be done;" many things to be made ready before this marriage can be made up. 1. There is natural distance between the parties, that must be removed; God cannot he one flesh with us: and betwixt parties to be married, there must be some suitableness of nature; therefore, to remove this distance, and to bring about the marriage, the Son of God becomes man, that he may be Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, and fo in capacity to be closed with. 2. There is a finful distance, which also must be removed before this marriage can be made up: for God is a confuming fire to finners; he and they neither will nor can unite in that posture: therefore, before an offer of marriage can be made to any purpose, " he must give himself for his church, that he may fanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word:" and then it follows. "That he prefents her to himself a glorious church, without fpot and wrinkle, or any fuch thing." He could not have access to marry his bride, the was so uncomely, filthy, and lothsome, lying in a most pitiful condition, in her blood, as Ezekiel fets it forth to the life, and at great length, chap. xvi. Therefore, to cleanse her, he gave himself for her. 3. Ere all this could be done, there behoved a ground to be laid for peace with God, the offended party, who was to be Father-in-law: and here comes in the covenant of redemption, Pfal. xl. 6, 7. " Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; then faid I, Lo, I come," &c. For taking away the curse, and reconciling the elect

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to God, the Father fays, as it were, I must needs be once in friendship with them, ere I can admit them to my house; and, Son, if thou wilt fatisfy my justice, and pay their debt, I shall give them to thee for a feed, and to be thy bride and wife. Well, fays Christ the Mediator, Father, I accept of the bargain: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." Whereupon it comes to pass, (as the apostle hath it, 2 Cor. v. last,) That he is made fin for us who knew no fin, and we are made the righteousness of God in him." For it was as really agreed in the covenant of redemption that he should be made sin for us, as it came to pass in the actual execution of it: and thus a way is made for the marriage. 4. When this is done, the marriage must be proclaimed through the world by the preached gospel, the contract must be opened up and read, and finners confent called for. We are told therein, that ' the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us:' and because " no man hath feen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he declares him;" as it is, John i. 14, 15. He comes and reveals more clearly the contract, first in his own Person, and by his own ministry; and then by fending his fervants, and telling that all things are ready. 5. The last thing to be removed, is the uncircumcifion and flupidness of our hearts. Naturally we are given to flight him in his offers, to refuse to open to him, and to let him in when he knocks; to make excuse, to delay, shift, and put him off; nay to refuse to entertain his propofal of marriage, and to give him a repulse. Therefore he comes by his Spirit, and oputs in his finger by the hole of the door," and lets fome " myrrh drop on the handles of the lock;" and powerfully, but fweetly, inclines the heart to cast itself open to him; and then heperforms the promifes of fanctification, "circumcifing the heart to love him with all the heart, and with all the foul;" as it is, Deut. xxx. 6. And all these promises are contrived, framed, and provided to meet with difficulties in us.

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We are told, John vi. 44. that " no man can come to Christ, except the Father that fent him draw him ?" and, Pfal. cx. 3. it is promifed, that " in the day of his power his people shall be willing; and whoever (being made willing) cometh, shall in no wife be cast

out, John vi. 37.

The fourth observation is, "That by the preaching of the gospel, whithersoever it cometh, and by the great things made offer of therein, all things are made ready:" obstructions, and whatever might hinder the closing of the marriage, are removed. The Father is ready, having declared his willingness to give his confent, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," Mat. iii. I am well satisfied with him, take him to you for your head and husband. The Son is ready to take all by the hand that will embrace him; pardon of fin, peace with God, fancti, fication, the mansion, &c. are ready to be bestowed: the feast is ready, the fatlings are prepared; the promises are filled with every necessary good thing: "There is bread enough in the prodigal's Father's house, and to spare." The contract is ready, and an offer of it made on the Bridegroom's fide; the terms are drawn up and put in form, and all things agreed upon and ready, even to the subscription: and there is no more required, but that the hearers of this gospel heartily-consent to take him, and submit to his righteoulness and dominion; which if they do, all things shall be theirs, even life eternal, and all things that may fit them for it, promifes for this life, and that which is to come, and Christ engaged to keep the bargain. And this is it that is preached every day to you, though, alas! unfuitably; so that it is not now, "Who shall go up to heaven, and bring down Christ from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, and bring him up from the dead?" that we may get him to marry; "but the righteourness of faith faith, The word is near thee, even in thy mouth," &c, Christ's consent is not to be asked or brought from afar, for

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he hath declared it in his word; and the terms of the contract are, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," Rom, x. 8, y. Engage therefore honestly with Christ, and keep to him; deny yourselves, and close with him; give up yourselves to him, and ye shall be saved; and that is all one with this, to be married to him. Yea, the day of the marriage is set, and that is the day of the gospel; the Bridegroom is come to the church, the table is covered, and the ministers, the Bridegroom's friends, are waiting on to espouse you to him, and to make up the marriage; so that all things meet and requisite for making peace betwirt God and sinners are ready.

The fifth observation was, " That Christ the Bride. groom, and his Father, are very willing to have the match made up, and the marriage completed." Therefore doth he fend forth his fervants with a strict commission, not only to tell sinners that all things are ready, but to bid them come to the marriage: yea, he not only wills them to tell that all things are ready, and to invite them, but to "compel them (as Luke hath it, chap. xiv. 23.) to come in;" and to ftir them up, and press them to it; to threaten them if they come not; and to accept of no refusal or nay-say. The evidences of his willingness are many, which I will not now infift upon; as, that he hath made the feaft, and such a feast, and prepared so for it, and given himself to bring it about, and keeps up the offer and proclamation of the marraiage, even after it is flighted: all thefe, and many more, tell plainly that the Father and the Son are most heartily willing; therefore they expostulate when this marriage is refused, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, but you would not!" Mat. xxiii. "O Jerufalem, Jerufalem, if thou, even thou, hadft known in this thy day things that belong to thy peace!" Luke xix. All these sad complaints, that "Ifrael would not hearken

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to his voice, and his people would have none of him," Pfal. bxxi. 7. that "he came to his own, and his own received him not," John i. 11. and "that they will not come to him that they might have life," John v. 40. make out his willingness abundantly and undeniably. Heart or most any torn at any too floatily

The fixth observation was, "That the great work of the ministers of the gospel is, to invite unto, and to endeavour to bring this marriage betwixt Christ and fouls to a close." The fervants are fent out for this very end, to conclude the bargain; though he be Lord of all, yet he would not employ in this work, angels: neither would he speak immediately by his own voice from heaven, for by reafon of his greatness we could not have endured that way of wooing; but faith on that matter to men, fubject to the like pafand infirmities, Go, tell that the King hath fuch a Son, and that ye are fent out to woo in his name; and make not only offer of marriage, but request, intreat, perfuade, pray, and obteft, yea, command and compel them to come to the marriage, by holding forth the curse which comes on them that will not come: and hence are those denounced woes, and shaking of the dust off their feet, for a testimony against them that will not come. I done by an in his fair five at

The feventh observation was, "That it is the duty of all to whom the good news of this marriage come to come to it; and, when they are invited to it, prefently without all delay to yield." Needs there any proof of this? does not the Master's sending, and the fervant's coming, call for it? do not his preparing of all things, his inviting to the marriage, and his expoftolating with them that come not, and our own great necessity, urgently require it?

The eighth and last observation was, "That all they that come may expect a very good and heartfome welcome." None need to fear that they shall not be made welcome; feeing they are come not uncalled,

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they shall not sit unserved: the Lord will not look down on fuch as come; nay, he is waiting on to welcome them, and to meet them, as it were mid-way; as we fee in the parable of the prodigal, Luke xv. his father stays not till his fon come to him; but feeing him afar off coming, he runs with speed to meet him, and then most affectionately embraces him, and falls on his neck, and kisses him: and if the poor child should fay, "I am not worthy to be called a fon;" he anfwers that, not fuffering him to speak out all that he had resolved to say: even when the debauched runagate had fpent all by riotous living, and would fain have told out the fad and shameful story of his gross miscarriages and great unworthiness, he interrupts him. and fays in a manner, Son, hold thy peace as to that; I know well it is grievous to thee; go quickly, and put on the robe, the ring, and the shoes that are provided for thee.

I come now, in the third place, to make applicadon of all: and, is it possible to speak or hear of this subject as becomes? who is sufficient for these things, to speak suitably in the name of the Lord, and to lay before you this contract of marriage with fuch a bridegroom? Beloved hearers, are ye in a fuitable posture to tryst with him? do ye think that we are for this marriage? is it your ferious purpose to close the bargain with him? If so, pray the Lord to give us to speak, and you to hear the word in such a manner as it may be a marriage-day indeed. There are very good news here, and bleffed eternally be God, that ever we heard them, or had them to fpeak of, and that ye have them yet to hear; they should make your very fouls, in a manner, flutter within you, and make you to rouse up yourselves to welcome them with gladness of heart.

And therefore, r. We would exhort you all to believe this report. There are, alas! but few who do indeed believe that the eternal God hath this design of marriage betwixt him and sinners: therefore, let not HI.

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your hearts be straitened, only believe that this is the good word of God, that thele are the faithful and true fayings of him that cannot lie, and that he is waiting on to ratify them to all who give them credit. It is somewhat hard to deliver or receive a word of threatening in faith; but, in some respect, more hard to believe a word of promise and of consolation; it is proportionably hard to look upon this as God's own offering of a marriage with his Son, as if he himself were by viva voce speaking it out of heaven, and to believe that this offer is really his: and therefore, as I' defire (as his fervant) to speak to you, to I would, again and again obtest you to be roused up, and to rouse up yourselves to believe it .. 2. Rouse, stretch, and enlarge your understandings, and your hearts and affections for beholding, conceiving, and embracing this rich bargain of grace: O confider feriously, from whom it is, for what end it is, how it is brought about, and doth come to you; the height and depth, the length and breadth whereof is inconceivable: be holily amazed and wonder, that the offer of this marriage comes to you, and that he is content to marry you. 3. In a word, would you know what we have to do with you, or what is our commission to you this day? This is even it, to tell you that the King hath made a marriage for his Son, and hath prepared and hath made all things ready for reuniting you to himfelf; yea, this fame King that hath made this wedding ready, and hath carved out this way of thoroughing. his defign, by speaking to you in his word by his fervant, speaks to you by us, and we speak to you in his name, and tell you, that our bleffed Lord Jefus is wooing you; we declare, publish, and proclaim it: O take notice of it. Our Lord Jesus is not far to seek, he is here waiting on to close the bargain with you: this is our errand, to proclaim these glad tidings to you; and what gladder tidings could you wish, than to have it told you, that ye may be happy and eafily happy; and that, if ye be content to be for there is nothing

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that might mar this happiness, but it is removed and taken out of the way. Is not the Father ready ? He hath given his confent: is not the Bridegroom ready, when he hath done fo much, and is waiting on your confent? The feaft is ready, and the garments are ready, and there is no more to do but to take and put them on; and faith exercised on him will do both. The contract is ready, and there is nothing to be changed or altered in it; and he is ready to accept of you, if ye will accept of him. Our bleffed Lord Jefus fays, he is content to marry you; and there is no more to do, but to fubscribe your name to the contract. you want cloaths, he will give them to you: if ye want a house, if ye want meat or drink, he will provide for you; whatever it be that ye fand in need of, for foul or body, in time or eternity, ye shall have it from him: the promifes are filled with all good things that pertain to life and godliness, to this life and that which is to come; there is in effect nothing wanting but your confent; and let not that be wanting, I befeech vou.

In profecuting this purpose, I shall speak a little, r. To those to whom the offer is made, or to those who are called. 2. To what they are called to: 3. To the terms on which they are called. 4. To the manner how ye should come. 5. To the peremptoriness of the call, and to the necessity of coming. And, 6. (if it be possible to win at it) A word to some motives, whereby ye may be pressed to come, and not to neglect the opportunity of such a precious season

of grace.

For the first, It is not one or two, or some sew that are called, not the great only, nor the small only, not the holy only, nor the profane only, but ye are all bidden, the call comes to all and every one of you in particular, poor and rich, high and low, holy and profane: "Ho, (proclaimeth the Lord, as with an O yes) every one that thirsts, come; and he that hath no money, whosever will, let him some and take of the water of

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life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. Our bleffed Lord Jefus is, not straitened in his call; and we may humbly fay, in some measure, that we need not be straitened in our bowels; in his name we invite all of you, and make offer of Jesus Christ to be your husband, that ye may have " a room among them that fland by, and be with him for ever:" I say, We make this offer to all of you: to you that are Atheists, to you that are graceless, to you that are ignorant, to you that are hypocrites, to you that are lazy and lukewarm, to the civil and to the profane; we pray, we befeech, we obtest you all to come to the wedding: "Call (faith the Lord) the blind, the maimed, the halt," &c. bid them all come, yea, "compel them to come in." Grace can do more and greater wonders than to call fuch; it can not only make the offer of the marriage to them, but it can make up the match effectually betwixt Christ and them: we will not, we dare not say that all of you will get Christ for a husband; but we do most readily offer him to you all, and it shall be your own fault if ye want him and go without him. And therefore, before we proceed any further, we do folemnly protest, and before God and his Son Jesus Christ, take instruments this day, that this offer is made to you; and that it is told to you in his name, that the Lord Jefus is willing to match with you, even the profanest and most graceless of you, if ye be willing to match with him; and he earnestly invites you to come to the wedding: if you can touch at any thing on his fide, that it is not ready, or at any thing on your fide, but it may through grace be made ready if ye will come, you may; but it is impossible, for "the covenant is well ordered and fure," and that " in all things;" and these words are not the words of men, but the words of " the true and faithful Witness," which ye must count and reckon for, when we are. dead and gone: "He hath killed his oxen and fatlings, and prepared his dinner, and bid his guests: all things are ready," in the due order and manner, whe-

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ther on your fide or on his, if ye be willing to flep to. and make the bargain. He hath drawn up the contract, and fent us out with it to you, to crave your fubscription; and, if ye be ready for that, he craves no more of you. Now, I put you all to it, whether will be subscribe it or not? And I would not put one of you without the reach of this invitation. However we be, alas! much carnal in speaking his mind, yet we defire not to obscure or limit our Lord's grace; he calls all of you to the wedding, he hath fent us out as his fervants (though of all the most unworthy) to · close and conclude the contract of marriage with you this day, if you be willing. Come then, O come and subscribe, and it shall be in very deed a bargain. If ye can, through grace, fay from your hearts, "We will take him;" then I fay to you, "Take him. and have him with the Father's bleffing." Our commission is not only to offer him, and to invite you to take him, but to close a bargain betwixt him and you who are content to take him: we would (as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. xi. 2.) "esponse you to one husband, that we might prefent you a chaste virgin to Christ," and have your hand fasted to him, as the word is : and this is very well becoming one of the days of the Son of man, and one of fuch feafons of his grace, to make this offer to great and small, to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gracious and graceless, hypocrites and profane: there is here no exception of perfons with him: the bleffed God is content to match with the most graceless and godless of you, as well as with those who are gracious and godly: "There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner," and the price was paid for the elect that are yet graceless, as well as for these of them who are now gracious; for all were once in the same condition: therefore look not with narrow and firaitened hearts on the rich and liberal allowance of our bleffed Lord Jefus.

But, secondly, What is it that we call you to, when we bid you come to the marriage? It is not to the

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communion only, it is not to any of Christ's benefits only, it is not to fay at first-hand confidently that all is yours, or to have a fure knowledge (as ye call it) and perfuasion at the very first that it is so; though I heartily wish that ye may find this persuasion on solid and good grounds; but it is first and mainly to marry the Bridegroom, and then to come to the feast. We call you to believe, and we declare in his name, that, if ye will betake yourselves to him in good earnest, ye shall be faved; if ye will, as it were, put your hand to the pen, and fubscribe yourselves heartily content to take him, ye shall most certainly have him and all his benefits. Ye that are profane, take him, but not to live still in your profanity, but to study holiness in all manner of conversation, in his strength; ye that are felf-righteous, take his, but not to live still in the good conceit of your felf righteoufness, but to renounce it, and to take him for your righteousness; ve that are blind, take him, but not to live still in your blindness, but to grow in grace, and in the know ledge of him: whatever ye be, and whatever ill aileth you, take him, but not to continue in the ill, but to get it amended. This, fure, is no less than to call you to the communion, yea, it is more; whether therefore ve come to the communion or not, we call and invite you all to come to Christ, and to marry him; which if ye do, we dare promife you in his name begun communion with him here, and full communion with him in heaven hereafter.

Thirdly, What are the terms on which ye are called and may warrantably come to this marriage? I need not stand on the terms on his side, nor to tell you what he promiseth; it is this in a word, "I will be for thee." He is content to make over all that is his to you; pardon of sin, justification, fanctification, his Spirit to quicken you, even his whole purchase to enrich you. In sum, (as it is a Cor. i. 30.) "He is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:" he hath made "all thinge

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yours, (as it is r Cor. iii. 21:) and in him ye are com. plete," (as the apostle hath it, Col. ii. 10.) Ye need never go out of him, to feek for any thing truly good that we fland in need of. And on the other hand, What feeks he of you, but " to be for him, and not for another?" as it is, Hof. iii. He feeks no hard condition: in fum, it may be comprehended in that word, 1 Cor. i. 31. "That he that glorieth may glory in the Lord:" not to glory or boaft in any thing, or in ourselves, but of him, and in him. But, for clearness cause, I shall draw the terms on your fide to these three, I. You must deny yourself, your lusts, and idols, and your own righteousness: "Where is boasting then? (faith the apostle, Rom. iii. 37.) It is excluded: by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith." Ye then that would marry Christ, and share indeed in the feast, we must have a fight of that which ve want, and of your own inability to make it up, and that ye are undone in yourselves without him: " To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteoufness," that is, To him that expects nothing by his works, but betakes himself to Christ and his righteousness for his juttification before God: and that is no unreasonable condition. 2. As ye would not glory in yourselves, so ye should glory in him. Whatever ye deny in yourfelves, ye should put him in the room of it; if ye dare not lippen or truft your fouls to your own righteoufness, lippen or trust them to his: he says, I am content to pay your debt; and, fince you cannot pay your own debt yourselves, say humbly to him, Blessed Lord Jesus, pay our debt for us. "He is the end of the law for righteoufness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. q. When he offers himfelf, take him thus, and let faith fay, So be it, Lord; I accept of the bargain. O! hold to it, and quit it not. 3. It is required that we shall be his, and have no power over yourfelves; and this takes in fanctification, dying to fin and living to righteoufness, adorning the gospel, living anH

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fwerably to the feveral relations ye fland in for thought mortification and holiness be not the cause for which he marries, yet it is a condition of the contract; and it well becomes the bride to be dutiful: "Thou shalt be for me, and I will be for thee." If he will gracilously please to be for us, it is all the reason in the world that we should be for him. Now we know somewhat of the terms, which may all come in under these three; there are many conditions on his side, and but few on ours.

Fourthly, Ye should consider the peremptoriness of this call, to accept of and to marry our Lord Jefus Christ on these terms. It is not an ordinary compliment, but proposed by the King the Father, and by the King's Son the Bridegroom; he fends out his fervants, who are come to call you peremptorily: and there are three peremptories that this offer and call hath with it; all which three we carry in our commission fion; and crave of you to fubicribe to them. The first whereof is. That we take no other husband but this bridegroom: there is no latitude left to you in this; ye must by no means engage with any other. "It is only for Jefus Christ that we woo, and we feek of you that ye would give him your fouls, your hearts and affections, that we may be devoted to him and to no other; and therefore we intimate to you that are married and joined to idols, that ye must be divorced from those, and betake you to him alone. The second is, the peremptoriness of the terms we speak of; we cannot, and we must not alter one jot or tittle. Ye must deny yourselves, ye must be content to be divorced from your lufts and idols, ye must renounce your own righteoufness, and give up with the law, your first huse band, confidered as a covenant of works, and run out from the curses thereof to him, which ye will never do, till ve fee your own righteoufness to be as filthy rags, and reject it, as part of your indictment, that ever ye trusted to it. Ye must "forget your father's house." 2. As you must deny yourselves, so you must close

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with Christ, and embrace him for your husband and Lord: do not think ye will or can dwell beside him, that ye can fit and hear him, if ye marry him not. 3. Ye must be devoted to him in your conversation, he must needs be your King as well as your priest: ye must forsake father and mother, and all your kindred, and betake you to him; you must dwell with him, and study to be answerable to the marriage-tie and obligation put upon you. We dare difpense with none of the three. The third peremptory is this, As ye must engage with no other, and as ye must not alter the terms, so ye must not delay to come and close the bargain, ye must not put off till to-morrow, nay, not an hour: "All things are ready." Just now, "Now is the accepted time:" here stands the blessed bridegroom, here are the conditions and terms on which he will marry you; and we, as the Bridegroom's friends, stand ready to espouse you to him. We dare not be answerable to our Master, nor can we be anfwerable to our trust and commission, if we shuffle by or thrust out any of you, if ye do not thrust out yourselves: nor may we admit of an excuse from any of you. And therefore let me again fay to you, that here is not only a marriage, and of all marriages most excellent; but let me befeech and obtest you to come to the wedding; either come, or give a reason why ye will not or cannot: as you can affign no relevant reafon for your not coming, we dare not accept of any irrelevant reason, nor admit of any answer but this, that ye will take him: we dare admit of no excuse; ye must not shift nor delay. Ye would think that those who were bidden, Luke xiv. might have come, when they had feen their farm and proved their oxen; but that would not be fo with them: fo I fay, it will not be with you to shift this offer. He is here waiting on to fee who will consent and fay, "Even fo I take him:" fay it, O fay it feriously, and abide by it.

O! are there any here now looking up to him? are there any here that would fain have it a closed bargain? are there any here that believe these things as ÍI.

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the truths of God? Then we pray you let them link down into your hearts, and come. And, to prefs this a little further, let me afk, What can hinder the making of this bargain Is it the want of notice or timeous intimation of it? That cannot be, ye are clearly convinced of the contrary: is it because ye will or can be happy without him? Wo to that happiness: is it any difficulty franding in the way? That shall be removed; yea, as to him it is removed already, and fuall be as to you on your closing with him. Pole and put your own hearts to it then: is there any of you that dare or can find in your hearts to refuse? The Lord is waiting on, his faithfulness is engaged to make out what he offereth: he ftretcheth out his hand, and faith, " Even so, I take you, if ye will take me." Are ye content to stretch forth your hand and to fay, "Even fo I take thee, bleffed Lord Jesus?" Or, if this be not win at to fatisfaction, are there any routing and stretching themselves to essay how it will go with them? what are ye doing? is it a bargain or not? Ye must fay, Yea, or nay, and that even now. We suppose ye will not fay downright, Nay; though more than probable you will delay: but this must not be; the table may be drawn, other guests may be called in, and ye removed. We cannot allow you an hour's time to advise especially from indifferency: yea, if ye begin to take advisement for shifting a present closure, Christ's call and invitation, and your confenting, will readily cool upon your hand. Paul fays, that "he confulted not with flesh and blood:" so must ye not consult with flesh and blood in this matter; ye must cast away the beggar's cloak, be content to deny yourfelf, quit your lusts, and close with him presently, or ye may never have the like opportunity. There is a necessity imposed on you from the command to come, from the curse and prejudice that abides you, and will certainly overtake you if you come not: ye will be eternally miserable without him, there is no happiness but in him. The King is on his throne, the table is let

and covered, the day is fixed, his fervants invite in his name: come therefore, come without further lingering, dallying, shifting, or delay. Alas! there are too many days put by already, ye must put by no more.

Now, let me speak a word further to this purpose: What can mar the matter? what can obstruct its being a bargain? Certainly it must be one of three: Either, 1. Because ye are not content with the Bridegroom: Or, 2. Because ye are not content with the terms: Or, 3. Because ye are not content with your-

felves, or with fomething in yourselves.

As for the first, I suppose ve can say nothing against the Bridegroom: is there any other like to him, or that can compare with him? I appeal even to you Atheifts, and profane wretches, that live and lie in your lufts, is there a beloved like this Beloved? hath he a match in heaven or earth? is he not the King's Son? And if ye ask who that is, ye may hear and know from Rfal. vxiv. "The King of glory, the Lord of hofts, ftrong and mighty in battle:" and from Heb. i. 3. " The brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his Person, upholding all things by the word of his power." There is none like him, but the Father and the Holy Spirit; and, as God, he is one with them. Ye have both the question and answer, Cant. v. o. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" What is yonder Christ, of whom we hear so much? The answer is given, (which we cannot stay now to paraphrase upon), "He is white and ruddy, the chief (or standard-bearer) among ten thousands, fairer than the fons of men." And if ye would know him more particularly, "His head is as the most fine gold:" he is God: "His locks (or his hair) are bufhy and black as a raven:" there is not the least unseemliness, even in those things that would, to our thinking, feem less necessary, as his hair: yea, "his very garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia," (as it is, Psal, xlv.) " His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters,

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washed with milk, and fittly fet." O fo lovely as his properties are! "His cheeks as beds of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies dropping fweet-fmelling myrrh; his hands as gold rings-fet with beryl; his belly (or bowels of love and affection) like the bright ivory overlaid with fapphires; his legs like pillars of marble fet upon fockets of fine gold; his countenance like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars." O fo excellent and stately! " His mouth is most sweet," or (as the word is) sweetness, in the abstract; never soul kissed his mouth, but there was a bond thereby laid on it, that it could never again part with him. In a word, "He is altogether levely," or (as the word is) "all defires:" there is nothing that fouls can defire, but it is in him; and there is nothing in him but what has defirableness in it: "This is my beloved, and this my friend, (fays the bride), O ye daughters of Jerusalem?" This is he, he is fure no common or ordinary beloved; fee if among all the beloveds in heaven or earth there be any like him. O ye despisers and slighters of the Son of God, put yourselves to it, is there any like him to be found? has he not the preference of, and the pre-eminence above all beloveds? " He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; he is the mighty God, Wonderful, Counfellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." It would well become us all to be wondering at him, and to be drawing near to him, to behold him in his beauty; to "go forth and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espoufals. O take a stayed view of him in his personal excellencies, and in the excellent qualifications of his mediatory office, and it cannot be that on this ground ye will cast at the match. Will any of you dare to fay it, or to abide by it, that ye will not marry Christ, because ye think nothing of him, or because he is not worthy to be thought of? We suppose none will

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If it be the ferond, viz. the terms that ye are not content with: ye would have Christ, grace, and glory, and every good thing; but here it sticketh, you look at it as an hard matter to be denied to yourfelf, and to be wholly God's; to renounce your own righteouf. ness, and your lusts, and your idols, to be absolutely devoted to him, and wholly dependent on him in your walk. As " the evil and flothful fervant called him a hard master;" so do many think of him, though they will not downrightly fay fo much in express words. But I would ask you, Is there any unreasonable thing here? or, shall all those terms be fought after, in some respect, in the marriage of a poor creature, like yourselves; and will ye deny them to Christ? 1. If you get his righteoufness, should ye not deny your own? If ye come under the covenant of grace with him, is there any prejudice to lay by the covenant of works? If ye get him for your second husband, and infinitely best, is it any prejudice to quit your first husband, the law? And, in that respect, is it reasonable to cast at the bargain, because it is free? 2. Is it not reasonable that ye fhould give him the room of all things? If he be able to fill the room of all, let him have his room, as being well worthy of it: it is your advantage to quit your lusts and finful pleasures, your covetousness, pride, vanity, felf-conceit, &c. to exchange all for him; and, if ye be not content with this condition, ye fav he is not worth the having. 3. Is it not reafonable that ve should be devoted to him in your convertation? that ye should no longer play the harlot, but be as a chaste virgin to him? Is it any advantage to you to follow your idols, that will go betwixt you and happiness? If heaven be an advantage, it is your advantage to quit them and be for Christ: or, is it any prejudice to be holy? or, will ye quit Christ because ye must be holy? or, will ye refuse him, because he will not fuffer you, to your ruin, to take your own will as formerly? Yea, it is not only reasonable, but very good and profitable; nay, there is a necessity you

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should be holy. And, may not love to him loose your heart from fin? There was another fort of confultation, and other bowels of love, at the first making of the bargain betwixt the Father and the Son; and it was calculated for more honourable defigns, and levelled to more noble ends than any thing the devil, or the world, or the flesh, can promise to you: and any of you that will stand and stick at the terms, that are fo just equitable, and every way reasonable and easy withal, we take your own consciences to be witnesses that they are so, and you dare not avouch the denial of their being fo. If ye be content to take him, to be reconciled and made friends with God by fatiffaction, and to be made holy by his fanctifying Spirit, to be for him as he shall be for you; it is a bargain: and what, I pray, ails you at fuch a bargain? If this be not made, ye shall never be able to make such another. What should ye do then, but come to the wedding? It is not time to dispute or debate, but to close. Say, O fay fincerely, as these do, Jer. iii. 22. "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God:" when he fays, as he did to them, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings;" turn it over to him, and fay, " Behold we come unto thee." Salah that the said

Thirdly, Are ye not content with yourselves, or with something in yourselves? Do ye indeed think and say, that it is a good bargain, and that the terms are very reasonable and easy, and we have nothing to say against them; but we have, alas! much to say of and against ourselves; the bargain pleaseth us wondrous well, and so do the terms; but we are not at all pleased with ourselves. I answer, 1. May ye not then the better quit and deny yourselves, and take Christ in the room and place of self? 2. I answer, Christ makes no such objection; he bids the most profane, the most ignorant and graceless wretch, the most hypocritical dissembler, that never knew what it was to be honest,

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come, and affures them that they shall be welcome, if they will come indeed.

Object. But I can do nothing, I cannot keep a word that I fay to Christ. I answer, Engage and consent to close with Christ, on his own terms, and doing and keeping shall follow; to give thy consent, is that which thou art now called to, and he engages to help thee to perform.

Object. But, shall I take an engagement, presently to break it again? I answer, If indeed thou consent, thou mayest fail and break, but the covenant will never be utterly broken nor dissolved; yea, thou shalt have surety for thy keeping of it: "Forasmuch as (saith the apostle, Heb. vii. 22.) Jesus was made Surety of a better testament."

If ye object and fay, That ye have much fin, that ye are loathfome and abominable; subscribe this contract and bargain, and ye have a free and full discharge of all your debt: "I will (faith the Lord, Hotea ii. 19.) betroth thee unto me in loving-kindness and mercies:" He will pardon your iniquities; there is no exact or severe seeking and searching out of the debt here, where it is ingenuously taken with, but rather a covering of it: he "will also cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols."

But it may be thou wilt object, and fay, I will rather purpose than engage, because I fear I shall break it.

Answer, But, it is likely that thou wilt make good such a purpose, who darest not engage? Or, will purposes and resolutions do the business, without performing? Purposes of marriage make not the marriage; it is actual consent and engaging which doth that.

But thou wilt object, and fay, Alas! I am not in a right frame, I am very confused, all things are wrong with me. Answer, What is this thou sayest? Will your frame be amended without Christ? will those swarms of corruptions be beat out before thou take in "the King of glory, who is strong and mighty in batale?"

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But thou wilt object, I am not clear as to my interest. Answer, Wilt thou not consent till thou be clear? that is as much as to say, thou art doubting, but thou wilt not put it out of doubt. If thou be unclear as to thy subscription, rather subscribe and write thy name over again; if ye have not at all subscribed, take now the pen and do it; say, Lord Jesus, I come to thee, and will be thine.

Object. Alas! fain would I come to the wedding, but I cannot come, it will not do with me; I would fain believe, but my faith is not prompt and ready. I answer, Is not the covenant provided with an answer to that also? It calls for nothing but for your subscribing; and, if ye say ye cannot, look well that it be not a shift: it comes to this, Yea, or nay; and if ye say, ye cannot say yea in faith, which yet thou would fain be at; is there not a promise of grace, that though your hand be as it were withered, if ye mint and essay, you shall be enabled to stretch it forth? Faith may come in the very essaying to grip him; only essay it, and it shall go with you.

Object. I have essayed it often, and it hath not gone with me. Answer, Essay it again, and cast a new knot; if your evidence be not clear, subscribe

over again.

Octject. But it goes not with me; when all is done, I cannot believe: I would subscribe, but I cannot write, as it were, I cannot distinctly act faith. Answer, What is that? Our Lord stands not on that; though you cannot write well, do as ye can: it is strange to see, how some's subscription is almost like a scratching with crow toes; yet it is a valid subscription; some again will write down their mark in place of their name, and that also, where it is well known, is admitted as valid. If you cannot, as it were, write your name in fair and legible letters, set down some mark, if it were but two scores or lines in any form or figure; if ye cannot act faith so distinctly, come on as you may; if ye cannot to your satisfaction say yea,

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with the heart, say it with the mouth, striving and longing to have thy heart brought up; force thyself (if I may speak so) to believing: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," Rom. x. 9. Endeavour to make thy mouth engage thine heart; bind thyself fast to Christ, even in the manner whether thou wilt or not. Act saith with the understanding, labouring honestly to bring up thy will and affections; and, though ye win not now to a faith that is distinct, it shall come in due time. Essay to set open the door, and it shall go with

you. Object. But my heart fays, All these are but fair words. Answer, Away with that blasphemy. They are the truths of God; essay then, O essay seriously this way of believing, and ye shall find power meeting you. The pen is, as it were, lying by you; and albeit ve cannot write well and be distinct, take the pen, and Chrift shall, as it were, lead your hand, and guide it to write fo as it shall pass in heaven for a subfcribed confent: fet yourselves to give him a welcome, and he shall account it to be a welcome. Say now, what more ye have to fay; lay out your scruples; this word, "All things are ready," will answer them all: the garment is ready to be put on, yea, Jesus Christ is your wedding-garment, take and put him on: he is the cure for all your difeases, apply him for the cure of them all. Ye cannot certainly be clothed, before you put on the garment; neither can ye be healed, before ye apply the cure; ye cannot by any means be rich, till ye marry him. But, beside all these, there are feveral other needlessly disquieting scruples, there are many other shifts, (and alas! that there should be fuch trifling, if I may call it fo, fuch whining, as it were, and standing on ceremonies, to speak so, with our Lord!) among which this is one, I wot not if I be in the covenant or contract of redemption, I know not if I be one of God's elect. Answer What is this?

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ye know not well what ye fay: have ye any thing to do with that fecret by a leap and at first hand? Are ye not called to marry Christ? is not that his revealed will to you? I protest, in his name, this is the thing that ye are called to; and will ye make an exception, where he has made none? Or, will ye shift obedience to a clear command, upon a supposed decree, which you cannot know but by the effects? Will 'ye reason fo in the matter of your eating and drinking? Upon a supposition that God hath decreed that ye shall die tomorrow, or within a few days; will ye this day not take your dinner, nor make use of any refreshment, till that supposed day come? Or, because ye know not if God hath appointed you to live fo and fo long, will ve forbear therefore your calling? Or, will any of you, in feeking after a match in the world, reason so? Will ye not feek after nor marry fuch a woman, till ye be clear that God bath, decreed her to be your wife? when or whom would ye marry at this rate of reafoning? But, 2. Because there is a fort of faculty or facility here to dispute against God, I answer by way of question, Were there ever any that had that doubt cleared to them before they came to Christ? Who ever would have come to him, if they had flayed till that had been taken out of the way? Or, hath the Lord told that to any before they came? Hath he faid to them, Believe, for ye are elected? But his method is thus, Believe, and ye shall know in due time that ye are elected. 3. Is there any that can fay, that the offer or the refusal of the match depended on this? If any of you will fay, Because I was not elected, he refused me; he will answer, " How often would I have gathered you?" And there will need no more ground for fentencing professors of the gospel to destruction, than this, Man, woman, thou hadft the offer of the gospel, and refusedst it; therefore go to thy place: he will not judge you according to the decree of reprobation, but according to his call, and your disobedience to it. And further, ye may take Christ's answer to

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this objection, from John vi. 29. where there are two wills, or rather two things willed of equal extent be. twixt the Father and Christ in the covenant of redemption, under which all the elect come; the first is, ver. 30. "This is the Father's will which hath fent me, that of all that he bath given me, I should lose no. thing." But, as if he had faid, This is not it that ye have to do with at first hand; therefore, ver. 40. he fays, " And this is the will of him that fent me, that every one that feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlafting life:" Not that all the elect should know that they are elected, before they believe; but that he that believes in him, may know that he is elected. He give the fame promise to them that believe, that is given to them that are elected: and they are diffinguished, because he would have them to come under distinct considerations.

And now, to conclude, Is there not need, great need to come? and have ye not good warrant to come? Lay by, therefore, feeking fatisfaction to fense and carnal reason: and, while the Lord says, " All things are ready, come to the marriage;" it will be greatly to your prejudice, to shift the invitation. Ye have the contract laid before you, alter not the terms, dispute not, delay not: this is our commission to you to-day; we tell you, that the King hath made ready for the feast, yea, all things are ready; come then, and let there be no debate about the matter. If ye will but fay it, and fay it in earnest, " Here, Lord Jesus, I give up myself to thee: and, though my consent be now but confused, I shall endeavour, through grace, to give it more clearly and diffinctly another time," it shall go well with you: only deliver up yourselves to him; and, in the Lord's name, I tell you; that ye shall be dearly welcome. As many as come humbly, loathing themselves, wondering at the free grace of God, and highly effeeming of precious and lovely Jesus, and adventuring to hazard their fouls on him on his own terms, and to take him for their husband and Lord;

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it shall not be accounted presumption in them to to do: nay, (as it is, Cant. iii.) "The bottom of his char riot is payed with love," and it is " for the daughters of Jerusalem;" it is made for carrying and keeping believers. Leap hither (if I may speak so) and ye will fall foft, into a fweetly perfumed and foft bed, even in the arms of Christ. There was never a carpet, never a feather or down bed fo foft as that is: only come and cast yourselves over on it. Though ye think that ye cannot apprehend and take hold of him, he can and will apprehend and take hold of you; and he is fo very tender hearted, that he will kifs you, and even weep over you for joy, as it were, on your necked and if ye have no garments, rings, or jewels (to speak fo)s to adorn you, he will give these to you. Come ford ward then, come, O! come, and let it be a day of covenanting with him: and, in fign and token thereof. give up your name to him; and, for confirmation, take the feal of his covenant, the facrament with your hand, and blefs him with your heart, that fo heartily welcomes you: and the bleffing of God shall come upon you that come on these terms. to any me of land he profits at its that white he counts to think or

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Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christs

THERE are two great works that the ministers of the gospel have to do; one is to engage people to

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Christ, and to persuade them to receive him and close with him to the other is to induce them to walk worthy of him, Col. ii. 6. " As ye have (faith the apostle) received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Paul, through the hand of the Lord with him, had engaged the Philippians to close with Christ, and, as it were to conclude the contract betwixt him and them: and now, being aged and in prison, and not knowing certainly if ever he should see them again, he commends this to them in a special manner, whether he see them or be absent from them, that "only they would let their conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ:" As if he had faid, Ye are privileged with the gospel. and have embraced it, and are eminent in the profession thereof; let me therefore beg this of you, that your conversation may be answerable to it. The adverb, only, intimates to them, that this was so necessary and of fo great concernment, that in a manner it was their one thing they had to do, in comparison of which, in a manner, they had no other thing elfe to do, whether he were present or absent; this, in some respect, is all that he requires of them: and the argument whereby he presseth it is, " that whether he comes to them or not, he may hear of their affairs;" and that he defires and expects, whether he be at liberty, or in prison and bonds, that they will thus especially testify their respect to him; which would be more refreshing and acceptable to him, than their communicating to him in his affliction, beyond all the rest of the churches, was, and for which he commends them, chap. iv. And in the close of the verse he instanceth two particulars, wherein he would have their conversation fuiting the gospel; or two qualifications of a gospelconversation and walk; one is, unity, that they " fland fast in one spirit;" another is, purity in the faith, " that with one mind they strive together for the faith of the gospel."

The first qualification is, joint and united stayedness and stedfastness, that they be not sleeting and waver-

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ing to and fro, easily disjointed and divided one from another, as many light professors are: and the second is, that they be studious in, and striving for the purity of the doctrine of faith, and serious in the practice and exercise of faith; desirable and excellent qualifications of a Christian, viz. purity, solidity, and seriousness in

religion.

We shall at this time speak of the exhortation, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gos, pel of Christ." Where, by conversation, we understand the whole of a man's carriage and walk towards and before God and man; and by the whole gospel, the whole doctrine thereof, as it respects faith and manners, or practice; but here more especially, as it respects faith in Christ, both as it is opposed to Heathenism, and as it is opposed to the law or covenant of works. To walk then as becometh the gospel, is to walk answerably and suitably to it, and in the whole of their carriage and deportment to make a manifest difference to appear betwixt themselves and all other persons, as they are dignified, and as the gospel requireth.

The point of doctrine, to which we would speak from these words, and which lieth obviously in them, is, "That they who are privileged with the gospel, ought seriously to endeavour, and to make it their great business, to have their conversation suitable to, and becoming the same." This is some way the one thing required of all the hearers of the gospel, of all that are baptised in the name of Christ. We need not stay on the proof and reasons of it; and the less, that none will dare downright to deny it, and that the rea-

fons are fo obvious.

There are three uses of it, that we would speak a little to: the first is for instruction, to teach us our duty: the second is of regret and expostulation, that the professors of the gospel, and of the name of Christ, should be so unlike and unswerable to it: the third is of exhortation to this so very necessary and so much

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called for duty, as the compend of all duties, which we would prefs and fet home by fome confiderations

drawn from the necessity and advantage of it.

As for the first, I think I may say, that, if ye had the apostle Paul preaching to you who have been communicants yesterday, this would be the great duty which he would enforce upon you, "only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ." Ye will readily say, What is that? I confess it is hard to tell, it is so marrowy and comprehensive; but it will be as hard to practise, it and a great deal harder. O that we were all breathing and pressing seriously and hard after it! However, we shall in the first place, and in the general, desire you to consider these few scriptures that hold it out, as namely, Luke i. 74. 75. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Tit. ii. 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. i. 15. Philip, iii. 20.

More particularly, from other scriptures we may take it up in these; or, it we read and consider the gospel aright, we will find these five things in it, which require a walk fuitable, or a walk with respect to them, and fuch a walk scomes the gospel. 1. In the -fubstance of it, our blessed Lord Jesus is, as it were, the text on whom the gospel is a notable commentary; and what he did, and how he fuffered, is proposed as a fair copy to write after, in all things wherein he is fet forth to us as a pattern for our imitation. 2. That from whence the gospel comes, and which gives it its rife, even the love of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in whose blessed breast it bred; and to "walk as it becomes the gospel," is to walk fuitably to that love. 3. To walk as becomes the gospel, is to walk suitably to the great offers of it, and to the promises contained in it, the "exceeding great and precious promifes, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature;" to walk fuitably to all, the excellent things, the fublimely spiritual and divine things promised. 4. It is to walk fuitably to the commands and directions of the gospel, in reference to all duties:

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"Having therefore (faith the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1.) these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the fiesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 5. It is to walk answerably to the obligations which the gospel lays on us, and to the confolations that flow from it to us. . If then we would walk as it becomes the gospel of Christ, we must have

a due respect unto all these.

If it should be inquired, What is it to have a refpect to these in our walk? We answer, It supposeth and includeth, these things. 1. A likeness and conformity; that what is called for in the matter of duty, or offered in the promise, we study to be like it: " We all (faith the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18.) beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the fame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2. Our fuffering none of these things to lie by us unimproved, and our endeavouring to make the right use of them; to suffer none of the promifes relating to justification, fanctification, or any other spiritual privilege and benefit to be useless, but to be laying due weight on each of them: and more especially, to be making right use of Christ the Mediator, " in whom all the promifes are yea and amen;" (for certainly they neither walk as it becomes the gospel, nor are worthy of it, who make no use of him;) to be making right use of the ordinances, word, and facraments, and of all appointed means of edification, public, private, and fecret; and to be making right use of the comforts of the gospel, whereof there is, through Christ, a very large and liberal allowance on Christians. 3. It includes our delighting ourselves in the gospel, our endeavouring to be cheerful, to be cheered, and made glad by the good things in it. A heartless, drooping, and discouraging life and walk is very unbecoming the gospel of Christ.

We may, in a word, briefly fum up a Christian's conversation as becometh the gospel, in these three: i. That he shine in his conversation, so as he may

adorn the gospel. 2. That he improve, by the exercife of faith, the promises of it 3. That he endeayour to live on the comforts of it, and to live in the hope and expectation of the comfort and refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the fulness of joys therein, that are coming. Somewhat of all these three is touched in those words, Acts ix. 31. "Then the churches had rest, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghoft, were multipled." They walked in the fear of God, in respect of their practice; and, in respect of their faith, they walked " in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;" and they were edified, grew, and increased, not only in respect of their number, but as to their spiritual state and stature: and thus, " the peace of God, which passeth understanding, guarded their minds and hearts through Christ Jesus."

Or ye may look on the gospel as calling for these two things, in our external and visible conversation: 1. That none get any occasion by our welk to reproach the gospel: that none may have it, or any just ground given by us, to fay, Take up fuch a professor of the gospel. O what prejudice to the profession of the gospel, is done this way, by the untender walk of many of its professors! 2. It is to walk so as our carriage may be a commendation to the gospel, and an ornament to the profession of it: that, not only reproachers may be ashamed, who falsly accuse our good conversation, but, by beholding of it, they may be made to glorify God: that we may shine as lights, by our blameless walk; so holding forth the word of life (being practical preachers) by our convincing and edifying carriage, in our feveral capacities, callings, flations, and relations; that they who are not won by the word, may be won by the love of Christ and of holiness, by our exemplary conversation, and by the humble, tender, and conscientious discharge of the duties of those callings and relations; the husband being kind, and the wife tractable, child and fervant

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obedient, &c. Excellent directions to this purpose are given by the apostles, and particularly by Paul and Peter, in their epistles.

More particularly, (which will yet be but formewhat general), we may confider the gospel, 1. As it holds forth and calls for holiness, and so for a holy and gospel-becoming conversation. And, 2. We would take

a view of the nature of this holines.

First, The gospel calls for holiness in a fix-fold extent; a failing or defect in any of which, makes a conversation, in so far, to be unbecoming the gospel. 1. It calls for holiness in respect of all forts of duties: " Be ye holy (faith Peter, 1 Pet. i. 15.) in all manner of conversation, as God is holy:" in prosperity and advertity; in religious, in moral, and in natural actions: " For it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 2. It is extended univerfally to all particular and individual duties and actions of all those forts; it reacheth all manner of conversation. The divinely infoired scriptures instruct the man of God, how he may be made perfect in every good work; as it is, 2 Tim. iii. And a failing in thought, word, or deed, is unbecoming the gospel. 3. It is extended in respect of the subject, viz. the whole man, and presseth that he be fanctified throughout: fo, 1 Theff. v. 23. the apostle prays, "The God of peace fanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, foul, and body, be preserved blameless." And, 2 Cor. vii. 1. it puts to " cleanse from all filth of the flesh and spirit." It requires that the judgment be kept found, and that no error or untruth be admitted by it; that the mind be fober, and free from any finful distemper; that the affections be fanctifiedly regular, and that they vary not; that the will be straight, and brought up to the straight rule of obedience; and that the conscience be kept tender, that it be neither darkened nor impure: that the members of the body be yielded as instruments unto righteousness. 4. It is extended to holiness, in respect of all capacities, callings, stations, and

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relations; of husbands and wives, of masters and fervants, of parents and children; as the apostle Paul heartily and frequently doth in his epiftles, namely, Col. iii. and iv. Eph. v. and vi. Tit. ii. where he presses it upon servants by this argument, "That the doctrine of God may not be blafphemed;" and on all thus, "That the grace of God hath appeared in the gospel," for that very end. 5. It is extended in respect of all times and places. I Cor. xv. ult. we are com. manded " always to abound in the work of the Lord;" in the whole tract of our conversation at home and abroad, in fecret and public, in prosperity and adverfity. 6. It is extendeth to, and required perfect holiness, holiness at the highest pitch: so, Matth. v. "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect:" and, 1 Pet. i. 15. " Be ve holy in all manner of conversation, as God that calleth you is holy." To be at exact holiness, even to have it perfect in respect of degrees, in our defign, defire, and endeavour; "to be purifying ourselves, even as he is pure," (as it is, I John jii. 3.) having him for our pattern.

If any should here object and fay, To look on the gospel thus as carving out a Christian's duty and walk so very exactly, in this extent and at this pitch, makes it appear to be very strict, and to differ little or nothing from the law; for what more doth that call for? fo that this doctrine feems to be legal. I answer, This objection feems to imply a great mistake: for the difference betwixt the law and the gospel is not so. much (if at all) in this, that the law requires more than the gospel; but that it requires what it calls for, on another certification. The law and the gospel agreee in these three: 1. The gospel requires holiness in as large an extent as the law; fo that whatever is a fin against the law, is also a fin against the gospel; for Christ " came not to abolish, but to fulfil the law." 2. It requires holinefs at the fame pitch, or in the fame degree; for the gospel commands us to "be holy as God is holy, and to be perfect as our heavenly Father

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is perfect.". It dispenseth with no sin, nor with any degree of any sin, nor with the least omission of any duty, more than doth the law. 3. The authority and obligation that lies on, and binds to holiness, is no less in the gospel, than it is in the law; yea, we may say,

that the obligation is in some respect greater.

But they differ in these three: 1. That the gospel taketh in the penitent, though he hath not been perfect and exact, and gives him pardon through Christ: which the law doth not. '2. The gospel calleth for duty in the strength of Christ, and furnisheth strength for duty: but the law now furnisheth no strength, but only supposeth it; it only giveth out the word of command, requiring of men that they walk in the strength which they had once in Adam. So that, though the authority and obligation be the fame, yet the manner and certification is not the fame. If there be any breach or failing, the law fays, "Thou shalt certainly die:" But the gospel (as I said) admits of repentance, and fleeing to Jesus Christ, " who took on him the curse of the law." 3. The law accepts of no duty, if it be not exactly perfect in the degree: but the gospel accepts of duty, though imperfect, if there be fincerity; it accepts, on Christ's account, of "a man. according to that which he hath, if there be a willing mind." So then, when ye are called to walk " as becomes the gospel," ye should know that ye are not to dispense with yourselves, in the least, in any duty that the law calleth for; though the gospel doth indeed more fweetly call for it, its "exactors and officers being peace and righteousness:" it is the same holiness in the matter, extent, and degree, which the gospel calleth for, with that of the law; though it much differeth as to the manner of calling for it.

Secondly, That we may know what is called for in the gospel, as a walk or conversation becoming the same, and so may yet further know the nature of gospel-holiness, (which was the second thing we proposed to speak to) ye should consider the gospel, as it is diswhere we would speak, 1. Of some qualifications that the gospel addeth, as to the performance of the same duties which the law requires. 2. Of some particular duties which it doth more especially call for, and which were not (several of them at least) so proper to the law.

As for the qualifications of duty, which the gospel addeth, they are these: (1.) A new end; for our end in duty new is, not to gain life by it, but fimply to glorify God, as we may fee, I Cor x. 31. I will not fay but this end was in the covenant of works; but in the gospel this is not only the main end, but some way the only end, and the other quite excluded and thrust out; and, when we speak of the glory of God, we take in the glory of grase, and the glory of the Redeemer, who furnisheth grace. (2.) It adds a fweet motive, viz. love to Jesus Christ; "The love of Christ (faith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 14.) constraineth us:" It is no more mere awe, that is the motive; but love, and love to God in Christ, who hath redeemed and bought us. (3.) The gospel qualifies our obedience and walk, as to our undertaking thereof; that it be not in our own strength, but in the strength of Jesus Christ. It teacheth us to go through the wilderness " leaning on the beloved," and leaving the burden of the work on him; truffing more to him than to our own feet or strength, as knowing that we cannot cripple out the way, nor do any thing without him, as it is, John xv. 5. (4.) There is a qualification required in respect of the frame of our own heart, with respect to a twofold fear: one is a filial and reverential fear, that proceeds from faith, in which we are " to work out the work of our falvation;" the other is, that it be without the fear that is opposite to the former, as the word is, Luke i. 74. The gospel calleth us, in our walk, to have a fear without fear; a reverential fear without flavish fear: it would have us neither to be altogether afraid because of the law, which hath terce:

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ror; nor to be without filial fear, for that is prefumption; but to have faith and fear mixed together. (6.) The gospel qualifies our walk in spiritual duties, in refpect of cheerfulness in going about them, which are to us (in fo far as we have corruption in us) heavy and grievous; but the gospel maketh them easy and light, as is faid, Mat. xi. ult. " His yoke is eafy, and his burden is light." Though it be a yoke, yet it is portable and light, when Christ and the believer are voked together; nor are " any of his commands grievous," as it is, I John v. 3. (6.) Though the gospel call for holiness, yet it makes the person to be denied to it: it is a gospel walk to be holy; but it takes in that with it which we have, Phil. iii. to " forget those things that are behind," to be denied and dead to all our attainments, and " to count all but loss and dung for Christ." It was indeed a law walk, to be blameless; but it is a gospel walk to study to be blameless, and pressing hard after perfect holiness, and yet to forget it, and to be denied to all conceit of it; and to be defirous to "be found in Christ Jesus, not having our own righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness which is by faith."

As for the particular duties, at least some of the duties, that are more particularly called for in this walk and " conversation becoming the gospel," ye may take these shortly. The first whereof is, A living by faith; and that is, when a Christian hath faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, as it were another life to him: for though there was a life of faith, or of dependence on God, in Adam before the fall; yet not the life of faith in a Redeemer: "I live, (faith the apostle, Gal. ii. 20.) yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by faith on the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And this is to be taken along the Christian's walk, even a continued application to and of Christ: this is that which he first betakes himself to, for righteousness; yea, when right, he employs him constant-

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ly, as " he is made of God to him wisdom, righteous. ness, sanctification, and redemption," as he is faid to be made to believers, i Cor. i. 30. The fecond is, The exercise of repentance, which was not called for as a duty by the law, though much ruin followed the breach of it: this was the fum of John's and of Christ's preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Though it be, alas! a very much flighted exercife, yet daily repentance notably fuiteth " a conversation becoming the gospel." 3dly, A gospel conversation should be in and with the exercise of hope. There was love to God under the law, but not fo properly the exercise of hope; there was, it is true, hope in respect of the thing promised, in case there had been no violation of the law; but not as respecting Christ Jefus, who is the believer's hope, Col. i. 27. " Chrift in you the hope of glory." I doubt much if the exercise of hope be well known to Christians in this geheration; few know what it is to "hope to the end," as Peter exhorts, 1 Pet. i. 13. A fourth is, The denial of ourfelves, and the exercise of humility; for as the gospel calleth for the denying of our own righteousness, so for the denying of our own wills, affections, lufts, appetites, and defires. There is another fort of love-fingleness and deniedness called for now, than under the law; because " we are bought with a price, and are not our own," as it is, I Cor. vi. 20. " If any man will follow me, let him deny himself," faith our Lord, Mat. xvi. A fifth is, Much mortification, that we be crucified to the world, to ourselves, and to our finful lufts: " I am crucified (faith Paul, Gal. ii.) with Christ, yet I live." So, chap. vi. he tells us, " that he was crucified to the world, and the world to him." And he exhorts Christians, Col. iii. 5. to mortify their members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, covetoutnets," &c. A fixth is, Much patience, meekness, forbearance, long fuffering, wherein our Lord hath given and left himself for a nonsuch pattern, Mat. xi.

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29. "Learn (saith he) of me, for I am meek and low-ly in heart." So, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. And hence meekness, patience, and forbearance are so much, and so frequently called for in the gospel, and on gospel grounds, as great duties becoming the gospel, or as special pieces of a gospel conversation. The seventh is, A heavenliness in our conversation, a deniedness, a holy abstractedness from earthly things, and living in heaven while on earth; and a living more where we love, than where we live: " If ye be rifen with Christ, (saith the apostle, Col. iii. 1.) set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth:" which is also called for, Philip. iii. 20. by his own example, proposed for our pattern, " Our conversation (faith he) is in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour." To be much in our affections fet on the things that are on the earth, to be earthly minded, is unbecoming the gospel. An eighth is, A great eye on eternity; an eye whofe looks are not bounded within time, but pierce through time, and all the fogs, mists, and couds that are in it. It is much unbecoming the gospel to have our hope much (not to fay only) in this life, or to be much taken up about the driving of earthly defigns and projects: but it is a good qualification of a golpel conversation, to have an eye before us on eternal life, 2 Cor iv. ult. " While (faith the apostle) we look not on the things that that are feen, but on the things that are not feen, and eternal." A ninth is, Much joy in God, much cheerfulness and heartsomeness; therefore believers are willed to " rejoice alway and evermore:" fo, I Theff. v. "Rejoice evermore;" and Philip. iv. 4. " Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again, I fay, rejoice;" which he fo much presses on them, because (as it is like) he knew that they were given to walk droopingly and heavily, which did not fo become the gofpel as rejoicing in God, finging and making melody in their hearts to him, cheering themselves in him, and " delighting themselves in the Almighty." A tenth is, Spiritual contentment: a contented conversa-

tion is a conversation becoming the gospel: "Be careful for nothing (faith the apostle, Philip. iv. 6.) but in every thing let your requests be made known unto God, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving." and then follows downward a little, "I have learned in every state or ease to be content: I know how to softer want, and how to abound." This conversa. tion was very becoming the gospel; he proposes himself as a pattern herein to them. There are many professors of religion, who cannot have, but they are vain; and, when they want, they are anxious and difcouraged; it is hard to carry the cup even; but a gofpel conversation is equal, sober, and composed, and not much up with having, por much cast down with with want; nor is it easily outwitted and nonplussed by the viciflitudes of those external things. venth is, Watchfulness. A gospel conversation is a watchful conversation, and never much surprised or moved: or thus, Watching (especially over the heart) joined with prayer, is a peculiar duty, that a walk becoming the gospel calls for, that we be not found like the flothful fervant, when his lord cometh. This is a duty well becoming us who live under the gospel, because we have stronger corruptions, and are at least under more temptations, than those who lived under the law. A twelfth is, Much felf-examination or felffearching, because of much corruption in us, and much guilt lying on us, is a duty which the gospel calls for; that we may fee what comes of it, how it is mortified and done away: and, there being many promifes in our offer, we should see what acceptation they get, and how they are embraced; there is hazard of mistaking our spiritual state, &c. All which calls us to be much in this duty, " Examine yourselves, prove your own felves," as fays the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 5. 13th, The " making of our calling and election fure," becomes the gospel. When we are hovering, and at an uncertainty as to our foul's estate, we are not only to try it, but to endeavour to put it out of

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question; " I write these things to you (fays John, T Epist. v. 13.) that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Ye should not only believe, but study to know that ye believe, that ye may comfort vourfelves in it: and it is a piece of conversation and walk unbecoming the gospel, to hang loose in suspense and at an uncertainty, in that greatest and gravest bufiness, 14th, Trufting in God becomes the gospel; and unbelief and diffrust of God is unbecoming the gospel. "Said I not unto thee, (faith the Lord to Martha, John xi.) That if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" To have a gracious offer from God, and to fcar at it, as if he were not in earnest, is very unbecoming the gospel: whenever he pipeth, it becomes us well to dance; and to believe and credit him, when he speaks fair and comfortably. 15th, A gospel conversation takes in, and calls for, not only holinefs, but a shining exemplary holinefs, holiness with a divine lustre and splendour on it. Merely legal holiness is dim and dark, and hath little or no lustre; therefore believers are called "children of the light, and of the day;" and they are faid to " fhine as lights, in the midst of a crooked generation." It is not only a conversation not spotted, or that is something well favoured; but such a conversation that is well lined (to speak fo) within, with the imputed righteousness of Christ, and much inherent grace and holinefs, and with outward felf-denied vifible fplendour and glory: " Let your light (faith the Lord, Matth. v.) fo fhine before men," &c. Even as the glory of his body, when he was transfigured on the mount, made his clothes to shine; so there is something of grace within, that makes the external actions and carriage of believers to shine; and words that will be very tasteless and sapless from others, though for the matter good, will have another fort of relish and weight from them; and prayer from their mouth will have another fort of refreshful weetness. 16th, A gospel converlation takes in, and calls for, much joy in affiction

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and tribulation: " We rejoice in tribulation," faith the apostle : it will make the Christian "take joyfully the spoiling of his goods," as they did, Heb. x. 34. It will make men come from the presence of counsels. rejoicing that they are accounted worthy to fuffer for the name of Chrift, as did the apostles, Acts v. last. "My brethren, (favs-Tames) count it all joy when ve fall into divers temptations," or tribulation: it makes pleasant and heartsome bearing of crosses from God, and of injuries from men; it makes the Christian stoop humbly and very low to these; it will not suffer him to render evil for evil, but will put him to do good for evil, and makes him do it on a gospel ground and account: because Christ frankly forgave the Christian ten thousand talents of his debt, he is ready to forgive an hundred pence of petty and inconsiderable injuries done against him. 17th, A gospel conversation is a fweet, quiet, peaceable, well-humoured conversation: it makes men and women good to live with; it hath much love and pity to them that are without; it is a good neighbour; it is a great friend to unity, and a great enemy to division: it presses hard after "flanding fast in the Spirit." 18th, A gospel conversation implies a settled fixed condition, that is not fleeting and wavering; it fuffers not Christians to be one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow, very unbecoming the gospel. A gospel conversation will not fuffer a man to be a temporizer, or one that cometh and goeth with every turn of the tide, to be of any party that is upmost; but puts to " stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free." The believer's heart is fixed, and his conversation is stable, when it is as it becometh the gospel. 19th, It is a bold conversation, that will scar at no trial for Christ, but will hazard and venture far, ere it expose the gospel to contempt and reproach; therefore it is faid, Philip. i. "Being in nothing terrified by your adversaries:" it is very loth to do or to forbear any thing that may make the gospel to be evil spoken of. IV.

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20th, It is a spiritual conversation, or a walking in the Spirit, as the word is, Gal. v. "Walk in the Spirit, (faith the apostle) and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." And, ver. 25. " If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." It makes us to pray in the Spirit, to praise in the Spirit; and, by affistance of the Spirit, it puts upon endeavours to do every thing that is called for. 21st, A gospel conversation is a wrestling and fighting conversation, striving and warring against temptations without, and a body of death within A lazy, fecure, whole-hearted conversation, when a person is lying by, and is not setting himself against, nor purifying himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, but at truce with corruption, is not, sure, becoming the gospel: hence the apostle, Rom. vii. hath fuch a combat with the remainder of indwelling corruption, fometimes complaining of, fometimes protesting against it, and sometimes bitterly bemoaning and crying out under its captivating power. There being in the believer two contrary parties, one of grace, and another of corrupt nature, which are contrary one to another, as it is, Gal. v. 17. a believer in a gospel conversation, is like Jacob's and Esau's struggling in the womb: it is for this cause that, Eph. vi. all the pieces of the spiritual armour are particularly described, and Christians, as Christ's soldiers, commanded to put them on; and to have a gospel conversation, is to be improving all the pieces of that complete armour of God aright, to their feveral ends.

These are things (and such others) that are particularly called for in a gospel walk and conversation: and if we would take a little view of them altogether, and gather the meaning of this use of instruction from the exhortation, "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ;" the sum of it may be briefly given in these four, 1. To be exactly studying holiness. 2. To be denied to our holiness, as Paul was, Philip. iii. 3. To be especially taken up with those particular duties, of living by faith, of exercising re-

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pentance, of aiming at, and closely purfuing after com. munion with God in Christ Jesus; (which is, though a much abused duty, and unworthily prostituted in the mouths of many a most precious duty and privilege;) exercifing hope, felf-denial, &c. fo that we may be in case warrantably to say with the apostle, I John i. 4. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 4. To be much in the exercise of all these heartsomely and cheerfully; and to be con forted and refreshed in doing duty, and yet denied to all our doing. A Christian, having a fuitable conversation to the gospel, sees his ills, and is humbled; observes God's goodness, and comforts himfelf, and bleffes God heartily for his goodness in refpect to both, and because there is hope of an outgate from all his evils, and a day coming when he shall be finally and fully redeemed from all his iniquities.

The fecond use leads us to regret and expostulate with hearers and professors of the gospel, at this time. Though this be the thing, and the only thing, that they are called to; yet, if we should go through and view the conversation of the most part, O how very unfuitably, and unbecoming is it to the gospel! even fo very unsuitable, that, if our hearts were tender, they would break and bleed within us to behold it. But, alas ! it is a part of our unfuitableness, that we cannot fuitably lament: little zeal for God, and forrow for what dishonours him, and reflects on the profession of his name, are much gone from this generation. Oh! whither shall we go, unto the city or country, to find a conversation becoming the gospel? We cannot be without some conviction, that we ought to be zealous for the glory of God, and ferious in the fludy of holiness in all manner of conversation, that the gospel be not reproached and blasphemed: if we be so, and if fuch a conversation be a duty, and a very reasonable duty, how comes it to be fo little minded and made conscience of? If we profess Christ to be our husband and head, our captain and leader, ought we

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not to be like him, and follow him? I take it for granted, that this will be generally affented to, as being very just and reasonable: and yet, without accomplishing a very diligent fearch into our own way, may we not find, at the first view, much, very lamentably much unsuitableness in our walk to the gospel? Need we descend to particulars? is not our unsuitableness obvious, palpable, and undeniable? Let me afk ourfelves a few questions: are we making suitable use of the promifes, and often meditating on them? are we taken up with delighting ourselves in God, and in the great and excellent things contained in the promifes? do we fludy to be like them, and fuitably to improve them? do we fludy to have those poor performances of duty that we go about, fo qualified as the gospel calls for? The lifelessiness and whole-heartedness that manifestly discover themselves in our very hearing of these things, declare much what we are: your ministers are some way perplexed and puzzled how to deal with you, and know not well whether to speak or to be filent, whether to pipe or to mourn. What fuitableness is there to the gospel, when the conversation of many is so spotted? So far, alas! are we from shining, that we are rather like blind lanterns without. I shall only, for whetting an edge on this regret and expostulation, instance in a few of these particulars touched on before, as to our unfuitableness to the gospel. (1.) Do we live by faith? Alas! is there fuch a life as this known by most of us? We are readily either living securely, carelessly, and unconcernedly, without troubling ourselves with fuch matters: or elfe, on the other hand, we give way to unbelief, and will hardly admit of any thing that may fettle and make us stand fast: we are found often running from one extremity to another; we are either carnally vain, light, and frothy, or we are anxious, heartless, and dejected, and are very feldom found steering a straight course betwixt extremes, and stemming the torrent. (2.) We may instance it in the exercise of repentance, which well becomes the

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gospel: our Lord Christ, John the baptist, and the apostles, preached it, and it is commended to all; it is an exercise very suitable and proper for sinners, and more especially for such sinners as have had many offers of grace, and have much flighted them: but where is it? ah! where is it? Converts are rare in these days, and among converts the kindly exercise of repentance is rare. We are generally as whole-hearted as if we were living under the covenant where there is no promife of pardon to a penitent finner. I mean not every fort of repentance, for there is a worldly forrow that works death; there is a legal repentance, arifing mainly, if not only, from the fear of punishment: but I mean of ferious and hearty gospel repentance, arising from the confideration of God's holinefs, and of his mercy and grace in Jefus Christ, that is accompanied with holy zeal, fear, indignation, and revenge, as it is described, 2 Cor. vii. (3.) Where is felf-denial? Is not that a rare thing? Many of us cannot bear a word reflecting on felf, neither can we quit a word once uttered by us, (though it may be fomewhat rashly and unadvisedly), wherein self is concerned, but will needs maintain and defend it: O what reeling and whirling about with the time is there among us? What hard pursuing after, and even chacing of felf-interests and defigns? (4.) Where is spiritual joy and rejoicing in the Lord! Who delight themselves in the Almighty? Who bless themselves on earth, in the God of truth? Who does really and humbly boaft in him all the day long? Who bless themselves in, and think themselves well come to with precious Jefus Christ, as their Mediator and Redeemer, as their Lord, head, and hufband? Who rejoice and glory in the midst of tribulation, in the hope of the glory of God? Joy in eternal things is much withered away from us, and it is just with God that it should be fo, fince we live fo great strangers to the "joy of the Lord, which is our strength:" upon but a very overly trial, we will easily discover that there is amongst us none, or but very

little, spiritual joy in God; I mean not only, nor so much of fensible joy, as of our little active stirring up of ourselves to give obedience to that command concerning "rejoicing in God alway and evermore." May I not conclude then, that there is great ground of expostulation with us all, both believers and others, who may be convinced, that this lieth indispensably on them, even to have a conversation as it becomes the gospel of Christ? ah, how little conscience is made of it! O mourn for and lament our shortcomings as to this; and fall to the work, fall about it more than ever, as your main business, to have a conversation becoming the gospel, (and it will disclaim them,) and, who fhall live to fee it, a great many more will be fo: alas! few or none of us all have a convertation as becomes the gospel; which is a lamentation, and should be for a lamentation.

The third use of exhortation is, That seeing such a convertation is fo much, and with fuch specialty called for, and yet so little feriously endeavoured by most; let me turn over to you the apostle's exhortation to the Philippians: If ye would know how to behave at home and abroad, in the duties of worship, and in the duties of your particular callings, stations, and relations, even in all commanded duties, then, "only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:" and beware of doing any thing that is unbecoming the gofpel, or that may give ground to speak any ill of it; beware of letting the precious promifes lie by you unimproved, but study to be like them. O study holinots in all manner of convertation; which is not only and fimply to be holy, or to have holiness, but a holiness influenced by the gospel promises in Christ, believingly improved, as the apostle exhorts, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Not only to be externally holy, but to be in the exercise of the graces of the Spirit within; to cleanse from all filthiness of the spirit as well as of the flesh, especially to purify the heart, the fountain of pollution; even to study to be pure; to aim at holines in

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the ftrength of Christ, in the largest extent and highest pitch, and yet to be denied to it, and all vain conceit of it; even to account it but loss, in the point of justification before God; to be in the practice of all the duties of religion, fweetly, pleafantly, heartformely, and cheerfully, walking under all forts of lots with the gof. pel contentedness: this, O! this would be a conversation worthy of, and becoming the gospel; nay, it would make a little heaven on earth. And we defire to be as preffing and peremptory in calling for this from you, as ever we urgently pressed you by any call or invitation to receive the offer of the gospel, and of Christ therein; and if we were to speak to you all, O men and women, one by one, by name and firname, this would be our exhortation to you, " Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Chrift."

We come now (as we promised) to press this on you by some few considerations: And, 1. Consider the authority that enjoins it, and lays it on you; and if ye trust him, and expect the accomplishment of any promife of the gospel from him, then take this as proceeding from the same authority: presume not, under the pain of God's displeasure, and of cheating your own fouls to their ruin, to take or meddle with the promife, if ye mind not fincerely to ftudy a fuitableness in your conversation to the gospel. 2. Consider not only the reasonableness of the thing, but also the fweet easiness of it; for, taking it in a gospel sense, it is an easy yoke and a light burden; and it is withal very fuitable and congruous to all professors of the gospel: ought not a minister to be like his calling, a merchant to be like his calling, a tradefman to be like his trade and calling? Ought not a Christian also to be like his Christian calling, like the gospel which he professeth? 3. Consider the ties and obligations that all who profess to have received the gospel, are under: are ye not obliged to fuch a conversation by your baptismal vow? Which obligation, though many of

you forget, yet God will require it. Think ye that

we are free to live as ye lift, to live like the gospel or

not, or to take one piece of a gospel walk, and leave

another? Ye are professedly resigned to God in baptism,

and are by it obliged to live every way as it becometh

the gospel; and ye must either on the matter re-

nounce your baptism and deny Christ, and so deal

treacherously with him, or ye must make it your bust-

ness to live like the gospel. . Consider that this gos-

pel will be the rule whereby ye shall be judged, whe-

ther ve have indeed received the Medistor, the pro-

mifes and privileges, the duties and directions, and the

graces of it, and improved them or not: " In the day

(faith the apostle, Rom. ii.) that God shall judge the

fecrets of hearts by my gospel." If ye would have

boldness when death and judgment come, endeavour

a conversation becoming the gospel: though your conversation were very much becoming the law, (as it is-

impossible now without gospel grace) yet that will not

fatisfy the judge; for ye will be judged both by the

law and gospel. 5. Consider, that though the Lord

had required many hard things of you, you would

most certainly have been obliged to have performed

them; and now, when he requires only this, ought ye

not fo much the more to aim at it, and endeavour it?

Otherwise, ye bring up an ill report on this gospel, as if it were an insupportable heavy burden, and most ineasy yoke; for which ye must answer at your peril. Confider the dreadful doom and fentence of the flothful fervant, who faid, "He is a hard master." 6. Confider the great prejudice that a walk unbecoming the gospel hath with it. I cannot easily, nay not at all to the full, tell you the prejudice it will bring to you; only this I will fay, that it had been better for you that ye had never heard the gospel; it had been better that ye had never been piped to by the gospel, and that ye had never heard any of its sweetest music springs, if (to follow the Lord's own similitude so far) ye endeavour not to keep all the measure thereof in your

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dancing after it, in your walking conform to it. Tell me, if we may be in earnest with you, what if ye were called even now, or before night, to give an account of your improving of, and profiting by the gospel, where. of we have so much, and from which we have been so often piped unto, how utterly unanswerable would many of you ee found to be? Your trifling way of walking, alone and in your families, your neglecting of prayer in them, with the chiding and bitterness betwixt husbands and wives, and with and amongst servants; your omitting to inftruct children and fervants in the principles of religion; your tippling and mif-fpending your time, declare fufficiently what your conversation is. If any of you shall fay, The conversation that you press is a harder work, and a more difficult task, than we can win at: is it any thing elfe, than what the Holy Ghost by the apostles present on the hearers of the gospel? O! take heed of branding a walk becoming the gospel with so black a note, as if it were an insupportable voke of intolerable hard bondage, left it be faid to you, " Evil and flothful fervant," &c. if ye had been ferious and diligent in making use of the gospel in a gospel way, by improving Christ and the promifes, this work would have gone better with you, and ye had been in much better case than ye are in now: if ye had been more in the practice of gospel duties, and in the exercise of gospel graces in secret, your visible conversation might and would have been much more as it becometh the gospel.

As for you that have communicated, there is a peculiar tie upon you: you have renewed you covenant with God, and is there any covenanting with God, but it hath this in it, That if there be thereafter a falling back, such backsliders come under the guilt of treacherous dealing with him? Let me, for a conclusion of this discourse, say these three things to you:

1. Is it suitable, think ye, to fast the one day for your not walking as it becometh the gospel, and to take unjust liberty to yourselves the next day? on a fast day

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to fpue out your foul and abominable fins, and to return with the dog to his vomit in a few days thereafter? will ye be fo unfuitable to your professions and confessions? Beware of that, for the Lord's fake; better ye had never fasted nor confessed, than thus to mock the Lord. 2. Many of you have been at the facrament of the Lord's supper, and in it ye have professed that ye have taken Christ for your husband. which implies the tie and obligation of a dutiful wife: What, I pray, is that, but to "have a conversation as becometh the gospel," and to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called?" as the apostle exhorts, Eph. iv. 1. And is there any straiter bond on earth whereby men can be bound? If, after thus covenanting with Christ, ye shall foully fail or fall back, will it not exceedingly aggravate your guilt? 3. Are there none of you who have come under some private engagements to the Lord? I take it for granted, if ye have not been fcorning God in your humiliation, and in your communicating; I take it (I fay) for granted, that feveral of you have come under particular and personal engagements to God: if so, ye should beware of loofing those ties, and of violating those so solemn engagements; and the rather, that it is to be feared, if ye keep not promife to God now, ye may never get a communion again to renew it. 4. I would have some of you remembering of those particular obligations ye came under, and promifes that you made to us, when you received your tokens, to amend those faults wherein ye were known to be guilty; most certainly those promises, especially so explicitly made, will bear witness against you, if those evils be continued in, or relapsed into; and we shall bear witness for Christ against you, if ye shall not be answerable to your engagements. For the Lord's fake, put us not to it.

Essay in good earnest, and set about the study of this gospel becoming conversation: I shall forbear to speak of encouragements to this. It will be one good

encouragement to confider feriously, that it is a walk becoming the gospel and Christ in it; that it hath fuch promifes made to it, and fuch a Surety for every promise; that the certification of the law is not at it; ye have pardon of fin promifed to you on your repentance, and furniture at hand for every thing called for from you. Take it in floort, whatever your calling, flation, or relation be, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." And remember the ties and obligations that ye are under. whether more general or more particular; otherwife they shall be remembered to and against you. Now. the Lord himfelf enable you, by his all-fufficient grace, to fuit all your obligations, to pay all your vows, and to make all your honest resolutions practicable relating to this "conversation becoming the gospel of Chift." The habit to the Event Clar age ty Alebourch and house I failed this school sturmage

SERMON V.

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ne consideration of the Assistance over the con-

Preached, if not after the Communion, yet very pertinently for fuch an occasion (however, it is subjoined to the immediately preceding, because of the affinity of purposes.)

On Purzipiii. 20.

For our conversation is in heaven.

THE life and work of a Christian is a far other thing than, for the most part, it is taken to be; and, no question, were we often thinking on, and studying the qualifications and extent of a Christian conversation, to which believers are called, we would walk

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with stopped mouths, in the deep sense of our great stortcoming, and there would not be such delusion under the conceit of self-righteousness: but the ignorance of this makes carnal men think themselves to be something; and makes even believers themselves, that they walk not so humbly, nor press so seriously towards the mark; neither do they propose to themselves, as they ought, a just and perfect pattern to follow.

Amongst other qualifications of a Christian walk and conversation, this is one, and a very considerable one, That "our conversation should be in heaven." A thing we fear the most part of the Christians of this age scarcely believe, much less endeavour, that they should live with their hearts above in heaven, in the lively expectation of the Saviour's coming; that they should converse in heaven among the spirits of just

men made perfect, before they come thither.

The scope of these words is plain. The apostle Paul had to do with the Christian Philippians, who were much tempted, and; no doubt, in some hazard to be led afide both from the faith and from the practice of religion; and the way that he takes to keep them right as to both, is by proposing his own example to them: as if he had faid, Ye will readily think, that I should be well acquainted with the way to heaven; now, the way that I take for my justification before God, is not to feek after righteourners by the works of the law, but to be found in Christ covered with his righteousness taken hold of by faith: and if ye would know what I do in reference to fanctification, this is it, "I forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before, preffing towards the mark for the prize;" being constantly, as it were, on the fpur, that I may attain that which I have not as yet come at, even that perfection of holiness, "that accompanies the refurrection from the dead." And having laid this before them, as a fair copy and pattern, he improves it by exhorting them thus, " Brethren, be ye followers together of me;" take the way

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that I take, both in the matter of faith and of prac. tice; and he gives two reasons why he would have them to do fo: the first whereof is taken from the danger that was in following those false teachers, ver. 18. 10. " Many of whom walk fo, as they are enemies to the cross of Christ:" that is enemies to the doctrine of faith in Christ, and to the exercise of it on him. and to the doctrine of his crofs, and also to a truly spiritual walk, " whose end is destruction, and whose god is their belly." The fecond reason is subjoined in the text, drawn from the great advantage which they should have by following him: " For (faith he) our conversation is in heaven." This is the spiritual, heavenly, and divine walk, wherein he holds forth himself and his fellow apostles as a pattern to be imitated by them, and fo teacheth them their duty. We are not (as if he had faid) like those false teachers. but our conversation is in heaven;" therefore folow us. And he gives an instance of this in the latter part of the verse, " From whence (faith he) we look for the Saviour." He is like a person on the watchtower, that is looking and longing for the coming of a friend; plainly infinuating thereby, that he looks not for much fatisfaction in this world, but was earnestly longing for, and in continual expectation of Christ's coming; to which all his hope and expectation of complete happiness, and of full fatisfaction to his foul, was closely confined.

So then, the great thing that he aims at here, is to commend a heavenly conversation to these Christian Philippians, and to all that should hear the gospel, and

this excellent piece of it amongst the rest.

There are only two things shortly to be cleared before we proceed further; the first is, What is meant by conversation here? And the reason of the question is, because the word is so very significant in the original, that we can hardly get a word in our language to express it by to the life; it is taken from that which signifies a township, a corporationship, (to speak so) V.

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or burgefsship: and it implies these two things, rift, A title to fuch and fuch privileges; as those who were Romans, or born citizens of Rome, and whoever were made burgeffes of it, had fuch and fuch privileges attending their burgefsship. The 2d is a suitableness and peculiar manner of living, and carrying according to the laws of that city; as it is often faid in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, " after the manner of the Romans," who had their own laws, customs, and usages: and, being applied here in a spiritual fense, it supposes, r. A joint interest with the faints, (or being "fellow citizens with the faints;" as it is, Eph. ii. 19.) who are all burgesses of the heavenly Jerusalem: though fome of them be, as it were, in the fuburbs and lower town, and fome in the higher; yet all here below have the same Master and Father, with them who are above in heaven. 2. It supposeth a way, walk, and conversation like heaven: to be peculiarly endowed with a nature, inclinations, defires, defigns, and qualifications fuitable to heaven. We take it here, especially in the latter sense, because Paul proposeth himself as a pattern to them to imitate: and it holds out his fuitableness to heaven.

The fecond thing to be cleared a little is, What it is to have a conversation in heaven. I answer, These two are in effect one and the same, to have a converfation in heaven, and to be heavenly in our conversation: it is even to have a conversation like that which Christians hope to have in heaven, and such as are bound, and on their way thitherward, should have. This is a general hint of what a heavenly conversation, or a conversation in heaven, is: and because, in profecuting the doctrines to be deduced from the words, we will have occasion to explain it more particularly, we shall say no more of it now.

The doctrines that arise from those words are especially these four: the first whereof is, " That there is a fort of heavenliness in the conversation of Christians that should be studied by them all without exception,

and that lieth on them as their duty."

The second is, "That this heavenliness of converfation is in a great measure, through grace, attainable:" for Paul and other believers attained it. Which is not so to be understood, as if there were an universal suitableness, or a suitableness in all things, in sojourning saints, to glorissed saints in heaven; for in heaven they do not eat nor drink, neither are they married nor given in marriage: but it is to be understood of a suitableness in respect of qualification, conformity, and likeness, in so far as is incumbent to sojourners who are walking thitherward

The third is, "That it is a peculiar and contradiftinguishing mark of a serious and suitably exercised Christian, from all other men in the world, that his conversation is in heaven, while that of others is

not."

The fourth is, "That it is not an ordinary or common, but a rare thing among professed Christians, to have a conversation in heaven." "Many (says the apostle) walk, of whom I have told you, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ:" but I and some few others with me "have our conversation in heaven." And the many that he speaks of here, we take to be those, of whom he speaks in the first chapter, who preached Christ but out of envy, and pressed holiness (it is like) with more than ordinary servour, being zealous of the law, and seeking to mix the righteousness of it with the righteousness of Christ in the point of justification; yet they had not their conversation in heaven, as he and some others had.

We shall not prosecute these doctrines distinctly, seeing this is the scope of them all, even to hold forth and commend the necessity and excellency of a heavenly conversation; which we shall, 1. Clear: 2. Confirm: and then, 3. We shall speak to the use of it.

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First then, for clearing what a heavenly conversation is, Ye should consider, that the apostle speaks of his own and of some few other godly persons their convertation, in opposition to those many mentioned by him before: and it imports or implies these four. 1. It is to have heaven proposed to ourselves as our great scope and design, next to the glory of God: even as to have an earthly conversation, is to mind earthly things, to have a bentness of spirit towards them, and to be wholly or mostly taken up about the things of the world; fo, to be heavenly in our conversation is to have our mind taken up about heaven, prizing, affecting, and feeking after heaven and heavenly things, as the word is, Col. iii. 1. " Seek after, or fet your affections on these things that are above." 2. As it imports prizing and affecting of heaven, and of heavenly things, fo it imports the taking of that way that leads to the end; and fo it is to be in the use of all means and duties that lead to heaven: " Seek (faith the apostle, in that Col. iii. 1.) those things that are above: fet your affections on things above, not on things beneath, or on the earth:" to hold forth the earneftuels and ardency of affections that Christians ought to have towards things heavenly, and how very much they should be, with holy care and solicitude, busied in the use of all means, and in the practice of all duties, for the furherting and promoting of an heavenly defign: even as worldly men are taken up and exercised with carking cares, leaving, as it were, no stone unmoved to promote and compais their earthly defigns. 3. It imports the having of our conversation like heaven, to be walking like those that are in heaven: not to be conformed to the world, or like the men of the world, but to be like angels and glorified faints in heaven, according to our capacity; as are taught to pray, in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." It is to have a native and kindly fuitableness and proportionableness to them that are glorified in heaven. 4. It imports this, that we should

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be often in heaven as to our thoughts and affections. as to our defires and delights, though we be living on the earth, that we flould have, as it were, more than our one half in heaven; as David hath it, Pfal. xxv. 1. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my foul;" or, as the word is, 2 Cor. v. Though we be "absent in the body," that yet we may be some way " present in our spirits with the Lord:" that we should make frequent vifits to heaven; that we should have much to do there, have much traffic, commerce, correspondence, and intercourse in and with heaven; that (in a word) we should converse more where we love, than where we live; which is held forth and expressed in the scripture. by " walking with God," by " having fellowship with him," by " following hard after him," and the like; a fuitableness to, and a converse in heaven, are mainly meant here. The world but strongen to of againg when

As for the fecond thing proposed, viz. the confirmation of this, that a Christian should study this heavenliness of conversation, the argument is clear and pressing from ver. 17. where the apostle exhorts the Philippians to " be followers of him," and here he tells them that " his conversation is in heaven:" and if his conversation was in heaven, then certainly it was their duty, and is ours, to have our conversation in heaven for he proposed himself as our pattern in this; and we have it, from the Spirit of God, by him pressed on us as our duty, to imitate him in this thing. It cannot be thought fo fingular or unprecedented a practice as to be peculiarifed, monopolifed, and engroffed to him alone; but fuch as was common to him, and other ferious Christians, according to their measure. Therefore he fays not, My conversation, but, Our conversation; as if he had faid, It is mine, and the conversation of others, and of all that follow me; and I would have you in this to follow me, and none other that doth not walk as I do. It it be needful further to confirm it, ye may take this one reason, which hath several arguments in the bosom of it: a Christian's conversation should be heavenly, because " all that a Christian

hath is from and in heaven, and some way heavenly:" as will ntanifestly appear, if ye look, 1. To a Christian's nature, it is from heaven; he is " partaker of the divine nature," he is "born of God," he is " of the new Jerusalem," his Father is heavenly, as he is taught to pray, " Our Father which art in heaven," or, "Our heavenly Father;" to point out, "that as we have born the image of the earthly, fo must we bear the image of the heavenly," as it is, I Cor. xv. 49. Where is the elder brother? Is he not in the heavenly places? as the apostle tells us, Eph. ii. 6. His " reasure is in heaven;" his " hope is in heaven;" heaven is the city, the manfion, the rest whither he is travelling. Or, if, 2. Ye confider the believer's calling and his obligation, thereby he is "partaker of the heavenly calling;" (as it is, Heb. ii. 1.) separated from the rest of the world, and therefore ought not to live as the world doth: he hath a heavenly law to walk by; he hath heavenly promifes to feed and live upon, and to comfort himself in; his happiness is heavenly, and all the duties that he is called to are so; of which this is the fubstance and fum, even to " to glorify God," and to feek to "enjoy him;" and fo to fhine in his converfation, as others may be provoked to glorify God. Are not his prayers and praises heavenly? and can a believer possibly go aright about those, and not be heavenly? To be "translated from darkness to light," to be " a partaker of the fanctifying Spirit of God, to be a new creature," to have "the Spirit of adoption, to have boldness of access to God," to be "an heir and a joint heir with Christ," &c. are not these heavenly? Or, if, 3. We look to his company, is it not heavenly? " We are come (faith the apostle, Heb. xii.) to God the Judge of all, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; to the new Jerusalem, (which taketh in all the faints in heaven, and the faints on earth), to an innumerable company of angels, to the general affembly of the first born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." In a word, whatever we look to,

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whether to the believer's nature, or to his end, or to the rule of his walk, or to the promifes, or to his work and way wherein he is to go; all is heavenly: is there not an obliging necessity on the believer, in respect of all these, to study to be heavenly in his conversation? which is the great thing that the apostle Paul presset on you, and from these words is clearly pressed on all Christians.

The uses are four: the first whereof serves for inftruction and information to all that bear the name of Christ. Know from this, what is the high pitch of holiness that we are called to; it is even to be heavenly in your conversation. Are there not many who have much need to be instructed in this? who never walked under the conviction of the necessity of this duty; otherwise, were it possible that the most part of men and women, who are called Christians, and profess a hope of heaven, could or durft live as they do, some in profanity, riotouineis, and gluttony; others in mere civility and moral honesty; and others in formality and hypocrify at the best? Let me ask you in good earnest, Are ye not convinced that this is a duty? or, do you think that Paul was fcorning or complimenting, when he exhorts to follow him in this? or, is it possible that ye can enjoy so many heavenly privileges, or be to any purpose performing heavenly duties, except ye be heavenly in your convertation? And if fo, mistake not Christianity, as if, when ye are exhorted to be Christians, we were only bidden not to be profane, or only to go about the external duties of religion, or only to have a fort of merely moral fincerity and ferioufness in the performing of them; which are indeed things good in themselves, and we do not, we dare not disallow them; but rather commend them: but ye are called to more, to much more, and that is to be " heavenly minded, and to have your conversation in heaven." I know fome are fo profane, and others are to mifbelievingly difcouraged, that, when they hear fuch doctrines as this, they will be ready, the

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one fort to fay, "We cannot all be faints;" and the other, " Alas we cannot be faints:" but let all fuch mouths be stopped; ye are called and obliged indifpenfibly to be faints; and, if ye be not faints here, ye shall never be faints hereafter. There are also some of fo diffempered difpositions and humours, that they either put off all or most duties, or at least go very heartlefsly about them, because they cannot attain perfection in them; but it is clear from the scriptures, that there is a kind of perfection to be win at here in this life, which is even this holiness and heavenliness of conversation: when ye shall be called to a reckoning, God will not ask you so much, whether ye did not get drunk, whore, fwear, lie, cheat, steal, or the like ; as, whether ve were heavenly in your conversation? And this is not to be aftricted to one, or to some few particular duties; but is the requisite qualification of a Christian in all duties, and in all his actions; whether he be praying, practifing, hearing, reading, buying, felling, eating, drinking, &c. or whatever he do and be . about, he is to be heavenly in all those.

And if ye ask more particularly, What that is? I shall shew you in what respects a Christian may be faid to have, and should have his conversation in heaven. And Ist, In respect of the inward holy frame and divine fet of his heart: he should be heavenly in that; free from those distempering passions, that the men of this world are subjected, nay, enslaved unto; and hurried with: he should not have his affections dragging on the earth, nor his delights nor defires taken up with things earthly; but he should be mortified unto, and weaned from all those things: he should not be like unto those who on all occasions are tossed with their humours, and with every wind of temptatation; but he should be so calm, composed, and sober, fettled and fixed in a heavenly temper of spirit, that words of reproach may not much trouble him, nor crosses and afflictions much disquiet him: he should bave fuch composure and sedateness of spirit, that he

may be much above the levity and unflayedness that the men of the world are under the power of: and he should endeavour to be defecate and purged from those impure mixtures of self-interests, that are repugnant in worldly men. 2dly, In respect of his work, he should and may have his conversation in heaven. and that is, when he is much in the exercise of those graces, and in the practice of those duties, that he is to be taken up with, in heaven: to be much in love to God, taken up with delighting in him, much in communion. with God, holily impatient to want him, or to live without his company: to be much in the study and fearching out of his perfections; to be studying to have the heart fixed, as it were a pillar in his house, and not to go out from him: to be much in admiring and adoring the free grace and love of God; and to be in a holy manner ravished with the contemplation of those: to be much in the work of prayer, and much in the work of praife, faying, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory, honour, dominion," &c. joining with " the four beafts, and four and twenty elders, faving, Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty:" to be much in prizing and valuing of God, in fetting out and commending him; to be in all duties willing and cheerful, doing God's will cheerfully, and with alacrity: to be much in longing for the fabbath, to converse more closely with him; longing often for privacy and retirement, to pour out the heart before him: and to do. all this with holy coveting to do it better, praying "that his will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." adly, A believer may be faid to have his conversation, and you are called to have yours in heaven, in respect of a heavenly walk, and as having a heavenly impress on all your conversation; to be walking as it were in heaven, and as if "holiness to the Lord," were written on your foreheads: which, being very comprehensive, takes in these: 1. To have the heart fixed in meditating on God and his law, on spisitual and heavenly things; to have a fublime and di-

vine firain of mind, not debasing itself to pursue vanities, but kept in a close and constant pursuit after communion with God, and conformity to him: to be in case to say with David, Psal. exxxix. "When I awake I am ffill with thee;" labouring to leave the heart and mind in heaven when ye lie down, and feeking to find it there when ye arise. 2. To have your affections, love, defires, and delights in heaven, or heavenly. 3. To have your words favouring of heaven, " ministering grace to the hearers;" endeavouring to have your words weighty and grave in the commen. dation of God and his grace. 4. To have your hearing of the word, and your praying, carrying much of a heavenly flamp and impression on them; hearing as if God were speaking to you immediately from heaven; and praying, as if ye were even before his throne. 4. In your more common and ordinary convertation, as in your eating and drinking, in your recreating, and in following your lawful callings and employments, even the very coarfest and lowest of them, to propose to yourselves another end than the men of the world do, making that your main end to glerify God; and to have fuch a heavenly and divine way of going about these, as may be convincing, edifying, and gaining of on-lookers: not to be predominantly influenced by felfish humours, designs, or interest, looking only, or mainly, to what may please or profit yourselves; but levelling all at the glory of God, and the edification and good of others, as well as your own. 4thly, We may be faid to have our conversation in heaven, when we have a holy commerce and trading, as it were, with heaven: as a man is faid to converse in France or Spain, when he trades and traffics there; fo, to have converse in heaven, is spiritually to traffic there: to have faith and hope exercised in and about heaven: to fend many prayers and defires to heaven, as to many empty veffels; and to be in the lively and longing expectation of their return full and richly loaden : to make many visits (as I said before) to heaven;

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and to be in all those, neither feldom, nor transiently and at flarts only, but to be frequent and more continuing in them; and though they should fometimes return either with feeming loss, or with very very little gain. vet to keep up the trade and traffic, feeking to make up our loss by a new veyage thither; for the trade is not always (to fpeak fo) alike quick. sthly, We may be faid to converse in heaven, by our abiding, as it were, in heaven; and this is one of the highest steps of a heavenly conversation. If ye should ask, How it is that a believer, while on earth, doth or can abide in heaven? I answer, These ways, or in these respects: 1. By having his heart in heaven, where his treasure is; "For (as the Lord fays) where a man's treasure is, there is his heart." The man, as it were, dwells there, and, if at any time he remove a little, he leaves there his great stock, and his heart as a factor: fo, though the Christian be discoursing, buying, felling, eating, drinking, &c. yet, in all these, his heart may and ought fome way to be in heaven. To have his faith in heaven, and, as it were, never to come out of it. 3. To have his love in heaven, folding its two arms about the Lamb, and him that fits on the throne; holily loth to have them loofed from those sweet foul-solacing and fatisfying embraces. 4. To have his hope in heaven, which is "an anchor cast within the vail," and makes the foul fafe and fure amidst the greatest tempests of outward trouble, as a ship rideth safely when the hath cast anchor on firm ground, so that there is no fear she will drive. In a word, these four, the heart, faith, hope, and love, being in heaven, we may fay that a man's best half and part is in heaven; his tether stake is loosed, and much of his tabernacle taken down, and he made in a good measure meet, ready, and ripe for diffolution, and for heaven: thus ye are called and obliged to have your conversation in heaven. 6thly, A believer's conversation may be said to be, and ought to be in heaven, when his contentment, delight, and fatisfaction are in heaven; when all that

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he defires, all that he delights in, and on which his foul feeds, and all that he is comforted with, is in heaven, and he hath not a day to do well, nor one comfortable good hour, but that which is given him from heaven: and this is not only to be abiding with, but to be delighting in God; having "the peace of God, that paffeth understanding, guarding the heart, and his love shed abroad therein;" and having all that which entertains his life coming from heaven. Thus Col. iii. 3. it is faid, that "our life is hid with Christ in God:" fo that the believer is affected with nothing, feeds upon, and is fatisfied with nothing fo much as he is with that which comes from heaven; he awakes, he fleeps, he rests there. This is to live in heaven, and to be heavenly in our conversation; and this is it that ye are called and obliged to, even to have your conversation in heaven, in all these forementioned rea fpects; that as ye believers are of another nature, fo ye may be of another and more divine frame of foul in your work and walk, in your thoughts and words, in your outward duties, and in the exercise of inward graces, in your commerce and trading, in your contentment, delight, and fatisfaction, to be heavenly in

And if any shall here say, This is a very hard task: I answer, 1. Can it be hard to be in heaven? Nay, it is an ease rather; for Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden is light:" and inasmuch as our conversation is in heaven, we have so much true spiritual ease and repose of soul: and it is what we leave behind in the world, that makes the difficulty to get our spirits screwed up to heaven, and to be kept there. Here lies the difficulty: but the more the heart and the mind be there, we have really the more ease. 2. Will ye shift, deny, or decline the duty, because it is difficult and hard? as indeed it is to corrupt nature. Notwithstanding all the difficulty of it, the apostle Paul, with his fellows and followers, did win to it in a good measure; and we may attain it through grace according

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to our measure. Is not this the way to heaven, which our Lord calleth Strait, and which but few find? and yet, if ye would try and make proof of it in good earnest, ye would find it to be not so very strait or unpassable as ye imagine it to be. It would be found to be waited with such delight, as would much sweeten any hardness in it; and ye would not want an insight in those heavenly mysteries, and the beholding your names written in heaven, and in the Lamb's book of life, not one hour's feeding upon and being solaced by them, for all the delights of the men of this world; and, since it is only hard to corruption, it should be so much the more endeavoured and plied hard.

The fecond use serves for trial, that we may know who is a Christian indeed, and a thriving Christian: or it may ferve rather to be an use of discovery and of conviction; and indeed it may very eafily and quickly make discovery of the unfoundness of many, and of the shortcoming of all. Need we insist on this? Is it not a truth obvious to all, viz. That Christians are called and obliged to be so heavenly in their conversation? Are not these the characters of such a conversation? Nay, is there not yet much more requifite in a Christian, even a divineness above what we can express? And if ye be (as ve may be) convinced that this is a truth, then let me in the next place ask you if your conversation be such? Put your consciences to it; inquire at them, whether your trade be to heaven, whether your peace and joy, your delight and fatisfaction be there? Would God ye would essay it, and could upon good ground fay that it is fo! But ah! is there any that can fay it without some hesitation? Is not the best exceeding defective? Or, if any of you shall fay, it is so; what then means your carnalness, your prevailing lufts, diftempering humours and paffions? What means your so much pleading for selfinterests, thus turning, as it were, of the world up-side down for our own particulars? How comes it to pass that ye who are profane do fpend so much of your

precious time in tippling, and trifle away fo much of it unprofitably many other ways? Dare ye fay, that ye who walk thus, are indeed followers of the apostle Paul? Or, if ye dare not fay, that ye are followers of him in his heavenly conversation, can ye think or expect to dwell with him in heaven? O " be not deceived, for God will not be mocked." When ye reflect feriously on yourselves and on your way, will ye not find just ground for being ashamed and confounded before God? Or, is there any of us all that needs to want an errand to the throne of grace, to confess and crave pardon for our finful shortcoming in this? I shall only speak a word or two, in further prosecuting this use, to you that are stout-hearted, and know no changes, that have always a good opinion and a good word to fay of yourselves; who are ready to say, that ye have a good meaning, and to think and fay that ye loved God all your days; and who at best content yourselves with, and sit down on a form of religion; who never studied to die to the world, and never made it your business, in good earnest, to mortify your lufts, and to be holy in the inward frame of your fouls. Is this, think ye, to have "your conversation in heaven?" Would ye know then, if ever ye have studied Christianity seriously? try it by this, viz. whether ye have been heavenly in your conversation; for, however ye judge of yourfelves, God will most certainly judge you according to this rule and qualification of a Christian. It is both fad and strange to think, how it comes to pass, that many of you bear and bolfter up yourselves with a hope of heaven, and profess that ye have no doubt but you shall come thither, who yet want and are void of this qualification.

I know fuch will be ready to object, Who are they that come this length? To which I shall only answer, That as I would be very loth to " quench any finoking flax, or to break any bruised reed," (whereof our Lord and Master is very tender), or to cast water of discouragement upon any the least spark or spunk of

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fincerity, where there is an honest aiming to walk according to this rule; fo, I cannot, I dare not but fay to others, in the first place; Have ye walked under the conviction of this as a duty incumbent on you? and have ye feriously proposed to yourselves as your great bufiness in the world, to be fincerely aiming at, and endeavouring after this conversation in heaven? Or, have ye not rather had peace (fuch as it was) when ye faid your prayers, morning and evening, though ye did not fo much as defign or aim at this throughout the day? And can ye, with any shadow of reason, think ye have attained it, or can attain it, who never feriously proposed this as a rule to yourselves to walk by, nor never had a conscience-disquieting challenge for such neglect and manifest shortcoming? 2. What labour are ye at, what pains take ye to profecute fuch a defign and bleffed project as this? It is one thing to pray, to be about external duties of religion, and to be a Christian in the letter; and another thing to be in these duties after a heavenly manner, and to be a Christian indeed, a Christian inwardly and in the spirit, whose praise "-is not of men, but of God." Is it really your honest aim, design, and endeavour, (whatever be the attainment) to be as much heavenly in your conversation, as it is to be civil and formal, or to attend the outward ordinances? I fear many of you cannot fay, it is. 3. What weight lies on your spirits for your shortcoming in this? Ye will (belike) fay, We are all short; which is a sad truth, for indeed fo we are: but, are ye really weighted and grieved for your shortcoming in this? Have there been any -times taken, to deal purposely with the Lord to remove the earthly mind, and to help to heavenly-mindedness? Have there been challenges and any measure of heart exercise, because of the want of a heavenly mind? and that not only fometimes at the hearing of a fermon, or in time of fickness, or when under some other trouble; but in your more constant and habitual walk? Is it one of the great things for which ye blame

and find fault with yourselves before God? And though your outfide and visible conversation be blameless; yet while you look on the carnalness and earthliness of your mind, and on the want of this divine and heavenly frame of foul, it makes you hang the head, mars your boldness, and, as it were, lays your feathers; because do what ye can, your heart will not abide in heaven. If it be thus, it is a token for good, and fome ground of peace; but O how rare is this? Many of you, belike, have often overly prayed, "Forgive us our fins:" who never took with, nor prayed for the pardon of this fin; but have lien down at night, and rifen up in the morning, having your hearts plunged and puddled in the world, without once minding heaven in earnest, and yet have never been challenged for it. O fad state?

The third use serves to reprove and expostulate for this unworthy carriage; for having either nothing at all, or but very little of a conversation in heaven. We take it for granted, that many of us are far from it, and that all of us are little in it, but very few even of the best are daily and constantly conversing in heaven; alas! it is but now and then, with many fad interruptions. For quickening this reproof and expostulation a little, let me propose these sew queries to you; and, in the first place, Do ye not know that the neglect of this is a fin, and the breach of a command, "Be ye followers of me?" 2. Is not this an excellent duty and royal privilege, to be admitted to converse in heaven? and therefore the neglect of it must not only be a fin, but a great sin, even a trampling on the grace of God, a flighting of heaven, and of a most noble privilege and dignity. 3. Think ye heaven to be of great worth? If fo, must not converfing in heaven be of much worth? will ye never fo much as once go to fee the house wherein ye lay ye are to dwell? O how unfuitable a thing is it, that those who are but days-men here, should sit down and fettle on the earth, without minding heaven; and be fo

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confined within time, as not ferioufly to mind eternity! 4. How can ve come before God with confidence and boldness, who do not endeavour thus to walk with him? Can ve fay with holy holdness, "Our Father which art in heaven," whose conversation is not heavenly? Can ye pray for holiness, and sav these words, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven," who never studied to be heavenly in any duty that ye put hand to? But, 5. and above all, I would ask you, Can ye hope to die comfortably, nay, can ye die in fafety as to your fouls, who know not heaven, nor what is there, nor what is the way to it? It gives a man confidence and comfort at death, that he hath conversed in heaven in his lifetime: such a man hath but little to do when he comes to die; he knows the way, and is not afraid; he knows the company, and longs to be with them; he knows the privileges, and longs for the full enjoyment of them: he hath little here, his treasure is above in heaven, and his heart, faith, love, and hope are there; his anchor is cast within the vail, and he would fain be ashore: fure this is both the believer's duty and privilege. Do not think that it is called for from fome more than ordinary Christians, and who have nothing else to do: the matter is not fo: it is most certainly a duty, to which ve are all called who have a mind to land fairly in heaven, when we come off the troublesome, toffing, and tempestuous sea of this world.

Now therefore, in the last room (as the fourth-use of the doctrine) I exhort, beseech, and obtest, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, all of you that lay any claim to the hope of heaven, that ye would, and more than ever, study to have your conversation in heaven. O be followers of Paul and his tellows in this thing. Need we adduce any motives to press this? Is not the duty clear? And is it not a most excellent duty, a most desirable qualification of a Christian walk? Is not heaven transcendently excellent? And is it not excellent to be heavenly-minded, and conversant in heaven?

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Wherein may we expect to prevail with you, if not in bringing you to heaven? What is the thing that should sweeten the study of holiness to you? Is it not this, even that, by having your conversation in heaven, ye come thither? Those who are now in heaven, think it a great motive: and, if it be not a motive to you, ye will one day curse yourselves that ye neglected it. Study it therefore in due time; this is the way to be free of the incumbrances of an evil world: there is no hazard of this estate being forfeited or sequestered, there are no plunderings nor quarterings here, no poverty nor pain, nor any sad evil occurrent here. O what a desirable life is it to be above all those things! And indeed, in so far as your conversation is heavenly, in so far ye are above them, and live the life of

ly, in so far ye are above them, and live the life of angels.

It is like ye will ask, What are the means or steps by which we may win in and ascend to this heavenli-

by which we may win in and afcend to this heavenliness of conversation? which is indeed a very suitable question, and would God we were serious in propopofing of it, and were convinced of the necessity of it: however, let fuch as would be at it, know, 1. That they may be much mortified and denied to creature comforts; therefore, Col. iii. these two are opposed, "Seek those things which are above; set your affections on things in heaven, and not on things of the earth." To go both up and down at once, is impoffible: if ye would be heavenly in your convertation, feek to have the world little and low in your estimation; to be not only free from the finful entanglements of it, but to be mortified to things lawful. I press you not to negligence in your honest and lawful callings, far less to lay them aside, but to a heavenlymindedness and holy deniedness in your diligence: "Use the things of this world, as not abusing them," as not being taken with them, nor glued to them. The minding of earthly things too much, clogs and keep mens hearts, that they do not mount up to heaven: it is impossible, while the heart is surfeited with the cares

of this life, that it can thus foar aloft. And therefore, 2. Those that would be heavenly in their conversation, must lay up their treasure in heaven; " for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." Were ye under the deep and due conviction of the vanity of earthly things and of the excellency of heaven and heavenly things, and laying your reckoning foberly and feriously, that heaven ye must have, it would be much more easy to screw up your affections to it: as where mens flock and treasures are, there is their heart; even fo, were your great stock and treafure in heaven, your heart would certainly be there; your hope, your love, and delight would be there: but your feeking after contentment and fatisfaction in earthly vanities, where it cannot be found, keeps your heart out of heaven. 3. Be much in the duty of meditation and contemplation of heavenly things: this is, as it were, the great wheel and first mover of the clock, to have the mind heavenly, often conversing in heaven, and often thinking of it, and often recounting the bleffed advantages, the glorious and great happiness that is there, even till "your meditation of God be made fweet," and till your delight in him, thereby ftirred up and strengthened, make a heavenly convertation: for little fuch meditation makes little heavenlymindedness; and, when the mind is not on heaven. fomething that is worse comes in the place of it. Ye that know the bent and inclination of your own minds to be naturally downward, and how natively (to fpeak fo) it runs on vanities; and how difficult it is to keep it, but alongst two or three sentences, fixed on heavenly things; and how preternatural a motion it is as it were, to make it afcend and mount upward, will eafily affent to the truth of this, It is an excellent word that David hath, Pfal. cxxxix. " When I awake, I am still with thee." 4. We commend this to you, (hinted at before) that ye would be much in trading and trafficking with heaven; to be often and ferious in prayer, frequently fending up defires thither, and

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bringing thence returns of prayer in great measures of grace, catching hold of, and gripping at fomewhat above you, whereby ye may be helped up that high and holy hill: it " transforms into the fame image from glory to glory," to be keeping love to Christ fresh, to have hope as an anchor cast within the vail. In a word, love to Christ, and delight in him, being, as a considerable part, so also the result of holiness; there must be a fludy of holiness in all the parts of it, of holiness in all manner of conversation, and a heavenly frame aimed at, and endeavoured in all duties, and in all the steps of our walk and conversation, in order to the keeping in, cherishing, and increasing of love to, and delight in him; and often thinking on that which helps to it, viz. " Let thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven:" a word often in the mouths of many, but little in their hearts. And O how lamentably unlike are the practices of many of you to it! We may indeed blush and think shame to speak, and you may think shame to hear of having a conversation in heaven, there being so little of it amongst us: but we must speak of it, and ye must hear it spoken of; fince it is a part, and a great part of our duty; and will be a part, and a great part of our reckohing: and we lav and leave it upon you from the Lord, to be fludied by you. Do not think that ye shall ever have your conversation in heaven afterward, who have not your conversation in heaven here: many of you that have a fair profession of religion, and seem to come near to that harbour of rest, and yet never enter into it, are like to a ship that comes, as it were, with upfails, very near the port, and is unexpectedly blown back to the fea again; whereas the believer, who has his anchor cast on firm and sure ground within the vail, is enabled to endure toffing, being like a tight ship, that is able to ride out the storm, and to weather the port. His treasure is in heaven, and there is a fure and indiffoluble knot cast betwixt heaven, where his treasure is, and his heart. Now, from all this

judge, what a mighty prejudice is it to be earthly. minded, and to flight this walk with God, and conversation in heaven: and who are they that dare offer or presume to come before God the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, in whose fight the very heavens are not pure, to abide his trial, who have been puddling all their days in the world, never once feriously and fuitably minding a conversation in heaven? O let the confideration of eternal happiness on the one hand, and of eternal misery on the other, provoke you, and necessitate you all to study in good earnest to have your conversation in heaven." And ye believers in Christ, and children of light, walk in the the light, fuitably to your heavenly Father, and to the hope of your heavenly inheritance. O be more conversant in heaven, before ye come to it, and where ye shall be by and by for evermore.

SERMON VI.

A Preparation SERMON for the COMMUNION.

On ISAIAH lv. 1, 2, 3.

-I will make an everlafting covenant with you, even the fure mercies of David.

It is hard to conceive or express, whether the things which the gospel offereth be most large, or the terms on which they are offered be the most-free. There is that, no doubt, in both together, which may make the beholder stay and wonder. Among many excellent offers of the gospel, that which is here, is one very full and free: would to God we could look on it

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fuitably. But alas! we may fear that we shall rather leave the sweet words with a vail cast over the beauty, splendour, and lustre of them, than lay them forth and unfold them as we ought, and as they call for; we would therefore look to Himself whose words they are, and beseech him to explain and make them out to us.

That this text speaks of the gospel, of the times of the gospel, and of gospel mercies, we take for granted, and have good reason to do so, as on other accounts, so from Acts xiii. 34. which clearly holds out to us, that these promises are not to be understood of temporal things: the 5th verse withal telling us, that the offer of this grace promised shall be made to the nations.

We may take up the words in these four; or, there is here a gospel cried fair or market, set out in four things: 1. In the wares, "wine and milk, that which fatisfies, and is good, and fatnefs," ver. 2. Soul, life, and "the fure mercies of David," ver. 3. These are the wares, which do all come to the fame amount. If ye would know what that is, ye may confider David two ways, one is properly and perfonally, as he is the fon of Jesse, and king of Israel: it was the covenant which was made with him, a main article whereof was, "That out of his loins there shall one spring, who shall fit upon his throne for ever:" and thus the fure mercies of David, are Christ and his benefits. The other way that ye should look on David is, as he was a type of Christ, the antitype and principal covenanter or confederating party with God; and fo in effect it turns to the fame thing, only this latter way is more clear. So then, we look on David here, as it is not unufual for the fcriptures to hold him forth, viz. as a type of Jefus Christ; and indeed the words following do abundantly clear it: for David, personally confidered, was now long fince dead and gone, and was not the Witness nor the Leader of the people; therefore it must needs be Jesus Christ that is here

meant, mainly and principally at leaft; as is very clear, Acts xiii. 34. Christ then being looked on as here understood, "The fure mercies of David," are the fure mercies covenanted and bargained (to fpeak fo) to Christ before the world was; and it plainly implies, that there was a covenant bargain betwixt the Father and the Son about the elect before the beginning of the world, whereof, as to the benefits therein covenanted to the Mediator, the gospel maketh an assignation to believers in time. 2. We have the chapman, (to fay fo) or the merchant to whom the wares are offered; it is he that thirsts, he that wants, and would have: and if any ferious poor fouls should think that they are not fuitably fenfible of their wants, then, faith the Lord, " Let him that hath no money come:" that is, plain dyvours (as we fpeak) or bankrupts that have nothing. 3. We have the terms on which all are offered to fale, and they indeed fuit wonderoufly well with the merchant; "Come, (faith the Lord) buy without money, and without price; hear, and your foul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." There is (to fpeak fo with reverence) not a purse opened, nor a penny paid for the affignation of this bargain; though by Christ's satisfaction there was a very great, a very costly and dear price paid. When Christ came to buy and make a purchase for all the mercies of the elect, the market was very high, and the prices were up; but, when believers come by the covenant of grace to receive them, the market is come down, and the prices are fallen wonderfully low; that which stood him very dear, is to be had by them gratis, very freely, even for nothing: it is good that Christ was at the market before us, he hath cheapened the prices admirably. And, lest any should think, that though there be no merit, yet fomething must be to mollify the feller, and to commend the merchant to him; it is faid, " Let him come without money and without price:" without money or money-worth; he that hath no commending

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qualification, is bid come. 4. We have the proclamation of this market: as grace hath choice wares, and fets them out very freely to fale, so it keeps them not close that up, but brings them forth to public view, and to every one, "Ho, come to the waters." It inviteth all to come, as it were, to the shore, as if fome fleet were come in with rare and rich commodities, for which men were to pay nothing; the proclamation is, "Come, and buy without money." And, because grace will not easily take a naylay, there is Oho, and O yes prefixed; "Ho, come and buy." But, because there is dulness and flowness on our part, notwithstanding all this, there is an expostulation added, ver. 2. "Wherefore spend ve your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which fatisfieth not?" The affignation of the bargain, and the offer of the wares, are again urged: " Come, and I will make an everlafting covenant with you." And, to let us know that this is fure, he fubjoins, ver. 4. " I have given him for a Witness and Leader to the people;" that all who are fenfible of their own inability to come, may be heartened to it, in hope of his help to enable them.

We shall only, in short, observe these two points of doctrine from the words: the first whereof is, "That there is a most gracious and merciful transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, for the good and salvation of poor souls, even of all the elect, past before the world was." There are sure mercies bargained to David; for they are first his: this is clear from that part of the words, "Even the sure mercies of David." The second is, "That all those mercies are put to sale in the gospel to (dyvour) bankrupt sinners, upon exceeding easy, low, and condescending terms."

The first doctrine is implied, viz. "That the covenant of redemption, wherein there were so many given to Christ, whose price he undertook to pay, is settled and established;" according to that, John vi. 39.

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"This is the Father's will, that of all he hath given me. I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The second looks to the administration of this covenant, by the covenant of grace in the gospel; according to ver. 40. " And this is the will of him that fent me, that every one that feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." So that, what is laid on the Son, ver. 30. as the condition of this covenant, is, in the 40th verse, made offer of to believers by

the gospel.

The first doctrine hath two branches: the first whereof is, "That there was a transaction concerning the falvation of loft finners, betwixt the Father and the Son, before the world was:" a covenant made with David, before it is or can be declared and preached in the gospel; the terms whereof were resolved on, and all the articles of it agreed upon; the Father proposing, and the Son accepting the bargain from eternity; as is clear, Pfal. xl. 6, 7. where, when it is, as it were, consulted what shall be the price of redemption, it is not "facrifice nor burnt-offerings," but, " A body haft thou prepared me: behold, I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God:" which is expressly applied to Christ, Heb. x. 7. This is easily cleared from the confideration of the parties contracting, and of the ends for which this covenant was undertaken, and of the effects that follow upon it.

The fecond branch of this doctrine is, " That this as to finners is a most gracious and merciful, a most kind, loving, and lovely transaction, exceedingly for the behoof and advantage of finners." There are four words in the text, which hold out this: 1. The nature of this covenant is mercy, all the articles of it favour strong of mercy to sinners; they are exempted, though Christ came under fore strokes: whether we confider this covenant as exacting of Christ, or promifing to Christ, it is always for sinners behoof. It

is a covenant of mercies, of many various mercies: fo. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. it is faid to be "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and fure." And, 2 Pet. i. 4. it is faid, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness:" mercies of justification, pardon of fin, fanctification in all its gradual advances, of fellowship with God, of grace and glory, even of every good thing, or good things of all forts. 3. It is very gracious and merciful in respect of the excellent kind of these mercies; they are not common mercies, but " the mercies of David," bestowed upon his anointed: Christ is furnished and filled with them, that " out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace;" even grace in a good measure. 4. They are stable mercies, not fleeting and quickly gone, not a glance of mercy which evanisheth; the covenant is everlasting, and the mercies are "the fure mercies of David."

If we might particularly go through all the parts of: this covenant, mercy will be found fweetly looking out in every article, clause, and circumstance of it. Look oft, More generally, to the whole of it; it is all loving kindnesses and mercies to finners: look to Christ's fufferings and death, O what mercy shines conspicuoully there! To his qualifications for the discharge of all his offices; to his anointing with the Spirit without measure, there is great mercy there; to all the promises made to him, fuch as thefe, " He shall fee his feed, prolong his days; the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; by his knowledge shall he justify many; he shall have a willing people," eternally to reign with him, &c. Are not these loud speaking mercies? The grace and wisdom that is on the Father's fide, and the grace and love that is on the Son's side, are all for the behoof and good of finners; it is all wonderfully excellent: is it not great mercy to you believers, that you were minded in this bargain? The Lord Christ, as God, neither needed nor was capable of any acceffion of grace; he took the relation of our Redeemer.

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and Mediator, and as fuch, in the human nature, was filled with grace and bowels of mercy and compassion, that grace and mercy might look through that rela. tion to us. 2dly, And more particularly, look to the rife of it: it bred in God's own befom, (to speak fo) John iii, 16. "God fo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who foever should believe on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." And the Son laid down his life out of pure love; there was no necessity on him to do so, but what he voluntarily came under; there was no motive from us to it, nor had he any adviser to it. 3dly, Look to the manner of his undertaking: it was very readily, cheerfully, and with ardent, vehemently ardent love; for that we may fay of it as of that chariot mentioned, Cant. iii. 10. "It is made of, and paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem." The elect being under the curfe, Christ out of mere love undertakes to fatisfy justice for them: facrifices will not do it, rivers of oil will not do it, the first-born of the body will not do it, nor fatisfy for the fin of the foul; what will do it then? Grace fuggefts, that the Son shall become man, and do it; and the Son faith, "Lo, I come:" O what love and mercy are here! 4thly, Look to the contrivance of it and there you will find much grace and mercy; that it is made with a Mediator, and with a Mediator that is a Surety; that the Rock is bestowed on him, and put under his custody; that the promises are made to him, and the price exacted from himself. 5thly, Look to the manner of executing it; what love, grace, and mercy shines forth in the Father, in taking vengeance on his only begotton Son for us? What love in the Son, in yielding to take it on, and in his leaving his manifestative glory for a time, that he might undergo the curfe, and in his doing all this with delight? 6thly, Look to the confirmation of this covenant: the oath of God on the Father's fide, the death of the Mediator on the Son's fide; and he hath freely bequeathed it as a confirmed testament and leVI.

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gacy to us believers, and bath instituted facraments to be feals thereof. O what mercy upon mercy! 7thly, Confider the effects of it: it runs in the sweet streams of grace, into the vast ocean and gulf of glory; wonderful mercy! 8thly, Look to the parties confederating and covenanting: the Father, Son, and Spirit, all are here; and it is grace and mercy that they covenant. 2. Who are the contrivers of it? Are not even they, in their deep wisdom, and in their exuberant, superabundant, and infinite grace and mercy? 3. What is the end of it? Even "the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 5. grace bringing forth and manifestly shewing here its great master-piece. 4. As infinite wisdom and love contrive, so infinite power executes it: and when all these concur in this bargain, when the infinitely wife God, all the Persons of the most glorious, dreadful, and adorable Trinity, as it were, fet themfelves to fet forth the glory of free grace, to make angels and faints behold and admire in it infinite wildom and incomprehensible love; what a rare piece must it needs be! And this is the end of it, as is clear, Eph. iii. 9, 10. "That all men might fee what is the fellowship of this mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

The fecond doctrine is, "That this good and gracious bargain, that is past betwixt the Father and the Son, which is wholly mercy, is brought to the market, and exposed to sale, on exceeding easy and condescending terms, and that to bankrupt finners." What proclaims the Lord here? even this, "I will give you the sure mercies of David: that which I and my Sonhave carved out for the glory of grace; and for a proof of the riches of my bounty, I will make all over to you freely." Hence, Eph. iii. 8. it is called, "The unsearchable riches of Christ:" so that, whatever Christ hath as mediator, it is holden forth here, "that

out of his fulness we may receive grace for grace:" a

proportion of all the grace that is in him.

In profecuting this point, we shall shew, 1. More particularly, what this bargain is, that is put to the sale. 2. Who the merchant is. 3. What are the terms on which it is made, and how it is made. 4. What is the manner how the gospel puts home this bargain, and lavs Christ and his fulness forth upon stands in the market place, as it were, (to speak thus with reverence of this divine mystery), that there may be free access to whosever will come and buy these rare and rich wares and commodities.

As for the first, That ye may know what the bargain is, and what is in your offer in this day of the gospel, take it in these few particulars: 1. All that ever any believer in the world had, is put to fale here: if any believer ever had fair privileges, fure it was David; if ever any had a merciful bargain, he had it. And fuch is this covenant; justification, adoption, peace with God, grace, and glory; all these marrowy, material, maffy, and effential bleffings that David had: it was not another Christ, nor another heaven, nor another covenant of grace that he had, but the same that is here. 2. Confider it further, and we will find it to be all that is made over to our Lord Jesus Christ: if he had a good bargain, the Spirit without measure, fulness of truth and grace, great glory and honour, being advanced to the right hand of the Father, the fame has believers their bargain proportionally, a due and just proportion being kept betwixt the head and the members, John i. 16. " Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." It is not another, but the same grace that our Lord Jesus Christ hath; yea, it is not another glory they are advanced to, no other table they are set down to, no other throne they are fet on; but the fame glory, table, and throne: it is to "behold his glory," to " fit at his table," to " fit with him on his throne," John xvii. 22, 24. Luke xxii. 30. Rev. iii. 21. In a word, there are not two covenants

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of redemption betwixt Tehovah and the Mediator, one for himself, and another for the elect; but it is one and the same covenant for both, though with many vaftly different respective considerations and circumstances. 3. Look to the wares and commodities (to fpeak to) that are exposed to fale in the gospel: they are not only the promifes made to Christ, but Jesus Christ himself is brought forth to the market; he is the great promise, and far beyond all the other promifes made in, and the graces given by the covenant: "I have given him (faith the Lord, ver. 4.) for a Witness and Leader to the people." He is the great Gift of God, that Gift of gifts, being the Father's fellow: nothing in heaven or earth, no person, man, or angel, can by far, very far, infinitely far, equal him. To whom can you liken or compare him? "To us (faith the prophet Isaiah, chap. ix.) a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." This is David's most substantial massy mercy. He is called Wonderful, because there is no possibility for creatures adequately to conceive, or with exact fuitableness to express what his name is, or what is comprehended within his name. 4 Look on Christ as Mediator, God-man, Emmanuel, "God with us." There is put to the market (to fpeak fo with reverence) God himself; for thus the covenant is expounded and fummed, as frequently elsewhere in the scripture, so particularly, 2 Cor. vi. 16. "I will be their God:" and Rev. xxi. 17. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God." Now, confider all these in a conjunction, viz. what all believers have; what Christ hath, and Christ himself; what God hath, and God himself. O what an incomprehenfibly rich and rare, great and glorious bargain is this! And yet all is by the gospel brought forth, laid before the hearers of it, and made offer of to them, on most easy and wonderfully con-

descending terms. May we briefly, and in a few words, fum up what it is? (1.) All things that may make up believers peace with God, and remove the quarrel. (2.) All things pertaining to, or needful for life and godlines; as it is, 2 Pet. i 4. (3.) All things that belong to the comfort and confolation of believers, even ftrong confolation, as it is called, Heb. vi. 18. There is no want fo great, but there is a fupply for it here; no case so sad, but there is a comfort for it here; there is not any thing that looks like a crack or uncertainty, but there is a fufficient fecurity for it here, in this covenant, (in this most full and wonderfully " well-ordered covenant in all things, and very fure,") to all who are fled to Christ for refuge. (4.) There is in it what is needful and requifite to full fatisfaction, to the folace, delight, joy, and complete happiness of the persons that cordially close with it: fo that a foul can crave no more, nor wish for more : it is even " all their defire," as David faith of it, 2 Sam. xxiii. c. It is Menjura voti, nay, Ultra menfuram voti; it never entered into man's heart to conceive, much less to defire it. It makes the fout fay, as it is, Pfal. Ixxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? there is none on earth that I defire befides thee." It hath all things in it; as it is, Rev. xxi. 7. " He that overcometh shall shall inherit all things." For if God and Christ, grace and mercy, be in it, is there any thing a misling? or can there possibly be any thing wanting in it? May I not very confidently alk you, Is it not a good bargain? If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, grace, heaven, and glory, be a good bargain; this is then most certainly a good bargain, a wonderfully good, matchless, and nonfuch bargain. And is not this gospel, whereby all these great things are brought to the market, good news? Take heed then that ye receive not this grace in vain; that thefe wares, worthy of all possible entertainment and welcome, fland not before you unbought: I fay again, take heed that ye receive not all this grace in vain, that these precious and costly wares go not from the mar-

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Secondly, Who are the chapmen or merchants? You would have readily thought that fuch wares would have required mighty monarchs, great statesmen, learned philosophers, or holy kings, prophets, apostles, and great men; and yet the proclamation is, (for grace cometh ordinarily in the lower way), "Ho every one that thirsts, and he that hath no money." These are the merchants who are meet for this rich ware. Are there any that want what may make them happy, and would fain have? are there any that have their peace to make with God? any that have not their interest clear and made fure? any that are wreftling with a body of death, and groaning under it? any that fain would have fin pardoned and fubdued? any that would have grace, heaven, and glory, and have nothing to give for all these or any of them, and who have spent many years labour in vain, and to no purpose, to come by them? It is to you, even to you, that all thefe rich' wares and rare commodities are in a special manner offered in this cried fair of grace. And, to clear this a little, I suppose there are none of you but are some way under one of these three, though the external call and offer comes indifferently to you all: ye are either, 1. Senfeless and secure; and to you the gospel fays, " How long, ye fools, will ye love fimplicity?" and, "How long will ye fleep, O fluggards?" As there is a challenge and regret here, so there is a conditional offer made to you, in as far as it is here implied, that the offer is made to them " who have no bread," and have been "bestowing their labour on that which fatisfies not;" glutting themselves with the world, or wrapping themselves up in the groundless conceit of their own righteousness: to such it saith, "How long will ye fpend your labour for that which is not bread?" Or, 2. Ye are some way affected with fin, lying under convictions stinged, some way burnt up, and confumed with the apprehensions of the wrath

and terrors of God. The word which this offer hath to fuch, is the very first in the proclamation, " Ho, every one that thirsts, come." And as we expostulated with the first fort, viz. fenseless, secure, unconcerned, proud, and conceited flanders-aloof, so we bid you earnestly come: and if ye shall fay, your conviction hath no edge with it, it is not deep enough; we answer, "Let him that hath no money come:" if ye have quite given over all hope of your prayers and other performances, as to making your peace with God by them, and have in that respect utterly renounced your own righteousness, and so "have no money, no price:" though ye be not pinched and pricked at the heart under the sense of fin and deserved wrath, as ye would, vet come, O come. Or, 3. Ye are fuch as have taken with your fin and lost state, and are in some measure, though but faintly, (at least to your own apprehension), stirring towards Christ, and would fain be at him: up, for to you the offer most kindly says, "Hear, and your souls shall live: eat, and be fatisfied." The wares are not brought forth and laid before you, that ye should only (to fay fo) block or cheapen, and ask the price; but also, and mainly, that ye might buy, eat, and feed on them: the gospel does not, as it were, so much offer to make with you a bargain, as it offers you the benefit of a bargain already made, viz. with Christ. And thus thefe three take in every person that wants, and is not (it may be) fo fenfible of it, and every one that wants and would have.

For the third, viz. the terms on which the closing of the bargain depends: they are holden forth in four words in the text, with two qualifications, which make up the terms. The first word is, Come: and that supposeth peoples leaving of their present standing-place and posture, and their moving towards the market place where the rich ware is exposed to sale. The second word is, Buy: which imports a price put on the market ware, a valuing of it, and a fort of treating

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to make it ours. The third word is, "Hearken, incline the ear," to wit, to God, and to his word, to believe and receive it, "and your fouls shall live." And the fourth word is, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you:" which implies an engagement by covenant to the Lord, after hearing and inclining the ear to his word, a striking of hands, and closing with the bargain. Add to these the qualifications, viz. coming, buying, striking hands, as it were, and closing the bargain, and that without offering money or price, money or money-worth, without offering or giving

any thing less or more in compensation.

Fourthly, Let us fee how the gospel puts all this to the market; so that, where it comes, those that are called must either close the bargain, or it will be their 1. It proclaims the fair, as it were, to all round about, that there are fuch wares to be had, and at fuch a price; the rarest and richest wares and commodities, and at the cheapest rates that ever the world heard tell of. 2. It doth not only proclaim, but invite, and double the invitation to come. 3. It not only invites, but puts the invitation fo home, that people must either make the price, (to fay fo, though it may be foon made, there being in effect no price), and buy, or refuse the bargain: if they will not be at the pains to come into the shop, as it were, it brings forth the wares, and lays them down in the market-place, and, as it were, on stands in the street, and cries, Come, buy; come, and enter the covenant freely: and this it doth by a frank offer, by earnest and persuasive inviting, and by the easy conditions it proposeth the bargain on. It stands in a manner with arms stretched out, ready to receive all comers very freely, whatever their poverty, wants, and necessities be; it craves no more but that we willingly take what he offers to put in our hand: "The righteousness of faith saith not, Who shall ascend to heaven? or who shall defcend to the deep?" There is nothing now to be fuffered, nor to be purchased by any more suffering:

"But the word is near thee, in thy heart, and in thy mouth." It lays the ware at our very door, as it were, so that we have no more to do, but to stoop down and take it up; but heartily to say the word, and it is a

bargain.

Now, for application: May we not refume, and fay, that there is a good and excellent bargain to be had in the gospel, and on very good and easy terms? It is a market day, and indeed it were a pity that fuch wares should be brought to the market, and that few or none flould buy; that Chrift should (to speak so) open his pack, and fell no wares. Therefore, let me fay a few words to you for perfuading you readily and prefently to embrace the offer of this richest bargain. And, in the Ist place, We pray you believe this truth: alas! there is little or no faith given to it; fouls come straitened, not thoroughly believing that God is putting Christ, grace and glory, heaven and happiness, and all to fale: these are "days of the Son of man," in a special manner, wherein Christ's sleet (to speak so with reverence) is come home, the shops are now well furnished with rich commodities, all his stands are set out, and full of grace. 2dly, Wonder that God hath condescended to make offer of such a bargain to us; that that which cost Christ so very dear, is offered so exceeding cheap to us. 3dly, We exhort and obtest you, that, while these choicest wares are set to sale, ye receive not this offer in vain. Are there any merchants here for fuch wares? Here is the market, the wares are good and fufficient, and the terms very eafy, and the price wondroufly low, even fo low, that it comes to "no money, no price;" Can ye possibly wish a better bargain, or more easy terms? Are there any chapmen that want money? any that are thirsty? then come; yea, be the frame and disposition of your heart what it may be, if you would have it righted, come; there is here that which will make you rich and happy here and hereafter. Are there none of you that will feriously ask what the Lord will say, what Christ

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will take, as it were, for these wares, or what are his terms, with a fincere refolution to take them on thefe very terms? Will ye not be prevailed with to make experimental trial, what it is to have Christ " made of God to you wisdom, righteousness; fanctification, and redemption?" Are there none among you all that have fins to be pardoned, wants to be supplied, strong and firring corruptions to be subdued and mortified? Is it possible that so many are come hither for the fashion? Are there none living at distance from God, nor under his curie, really or to their own apprehension, that would have the diffance and curfe removed? Are there no weak graces to be strengthened? If there be any fuch merchants, that have a mind and a heart to the wares, I say to them from the Lord, as his herald, "Ho, every one that thirsts, and he that hath no money, come." This is the scope of the gospel, and the preparation for Christ, and also for the communion, that it calleth for from poor fouls, that would fain close the bargain, and let their feal to it, and would have God's feal fet to it to-morrow, by taking the facrament. Speak, what fay ye? Pose and put your hearts to it, to declare if they be indeed willing , and well content to make and hold the bargain on his own terms; if they be fo, (as there is all the reason in the world they should), then, I say, ye have a good bargain: I fay again, Speak, pose your hearts, if ye will make and hold the bargain on these terms or not.

There are these things that do singularly commend this bargain. (1.) The excellency of it. Ye will go through all the markets in the world, ere ye get such rich mercies, of so rare a kind, so sure and so cheap: ye would, belike, think much to have so much land, gold, or money; but what are those to this bargain? Those will evanish and turn to ashes, when this will endure and abide with you for ever. What are ye doing? who like so many horse leeches, are sucking up, and glutting yourselves with the world, or living securely and carelessly, or patching up your own righte-

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ousness; is there any of those bargains like this? We appeal to your own consciences, and nothing doubt but they will one day bear witness against you, that ye heard of fuch a bargain, and had it in your offer. and yet wilfully refused to accept of it. (2.) Is there any bargain more fuitable for you who have your peace to make with God, for you who have corrup. tion lively in you, than to have a King, Captain, and Conqueror to bring it down, and to trample on it. after he hath as a priest reconciled you to God? Is there any more fuitable bargain for you who have your own pinches and straits, and your comforts, at a very low ebb, for you who have wants that cannot be numbered, and who cannot of yourfelves command one stayed spiritual thought? If ye were perfectly righteous, and fairly landed in eternity, ye might possibly think the less of it (though even glorified faints put a great value on it, and glorious angels admire it); but that finners dwelling on earth in cottages of clay, whose habitation is in the duft, should think little of it, it is strange, and even wonderful. Is there, or can there be a more fuitable bargain for you that want money? Is it not exactly calculated for your case, and shapen out for you, fo as in every thing it may meet with with your wants, difficulties, and objections? (3.) Are not the terms most reasonable? No great thing is fought for from you; if a lordship or a kingdom were offered to a poor man for a penny, that had no money at all, it would fignify nothing at all to him; but, behold, here peace and pardon, grace and glory, even all good things, are offered to you freely. (4.) Is not your necessity fuch, that ye cannot be well without it? For though ye fhould spend your money, and beflow much labour, and even wear out your very eyes with weeping, and your hearts with grief and forrow, if ye take not this course, all will only have this motto written thereon, "Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity and vexation of spirit." When ye come to feed on it, ye will find it to be but wind. If peace with God,

if God and Christ, if grace and glory, be necessary, then this bargain is necessary; but if ye will continue lazy, indifferent, lukewarm, and unconcerned in the matter, ye shall find that ye have sitten in your light greatly, and fuffered the opportunity of the market to flip, which ye will never possibly recover: and therefore, for the Lord's fake, let neither legal weeping, carnal fear or forrow, hypocrify, felf-conceit, nor miftakes of Christ and of free grace, divert you from making this bargain; but feek grace, come over these and all other obstructions, and, while the market lasts, "Come and buy, without money and without price." It is hard to know how long your day shall last: there are many country fides and cities, in the streets whereof these packs (to say so) of rich wares were opened up, laid forth and exposed to fale, that now for many years, yea for feveral ages, have not heard of them, nor the gospel preached. What (at least in purity and power) is now in Jerusalem, and in the seven famous churches of Asia, but the voice of terror, and, as it were, the screeching of owls? And, seeing "God is not flack, as men count flackness," what know ye, when the kingdom of God may be taken from you, and given to others; and when he will cry, (to speak so), Pack and go? Every day is not a market day, every Lord's day is not a communion day: many congrega. tions in Ireland and elsewhere have fadly found this, wherein it hath come to pass, that great scarcity and want are come where there was once great plenty. And, to press this a little further, we may, in the 1st place, ask, Whereat it sticks and halts? I tell you, that there either must be a bargain, or it must (and will fometime) be known where the blame lies. Were it but the bare reading of these very words, they bring the invitation and offer to you; and will ye dare to cast at the wares, or the terms on which they are offered? Grace brings a good bargain to you, and stoops very law with it. For, 1. It will not stand with you on bygones, if now you deal honeftly; "the fure mer-

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cies of David" will cover and blot out those. And if any of you think that ye have much debt on your head, as who bath not? it will not upbraid you; "The iniquity of Jacob shall be fought for, and shall not be found." There shall be, as it were, scores drawn through them, your accounts shall be all dashed out by free grace's pen. This is a cried fair and proclaim. ed market of free grace, from which no honest comer shall be secluded, thrust back, or fent away empty; for here an empty purse needs not make a blate or bashful merchant. 2. Grace Trands not precifely on fore-preparations, (where fouls honeftly and fincerely come) as that ve have not been fo and fo humbled, and have not fuch and fuch previous qualifications, as ye would be at: nay, forneway it excludes these, as offering to bring money and fome price, which would quite spoil the nature of the market of free grace; nay vet, I fay further, if it were possible that a foul would come without fense of fin, grace would embrace it; fense of fin being no condition of the covenant, but a physical (to speak so) qualification of the covenanter. and grace is free to them that want it. And let it be supposed to be in a person void of grace, and still in unrenewed black nature, it is there but a fplendid fin, as those shadows of moral virtues in all merely natural men are; grace can, at the instant of coming, create qualifications. There could readily be no qualifications in Zaccheus when he was on the tree; yet Christ tells him, "Salvation this day is come to thy house." 3. Grace stands not on the want of any effect of faith, where it calls to believing: it will not stand on darkness of interest, nor on want of progress in fanctification, nor on things being out of order; for, where it comes, it puts things in order. It will be no relevant exception for a person that hath not closed with the bargain, and hath not embraced Christ, to say, " Alas! I have no love to God, to the godly, and to his intereft:" because grace can say, Thou hast not closed with Christ, and so canst not have the effect before

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the cause. Come and close, and these and other effects shall follow. 4. It stands not on degrees of faith, nor on the strength, firmness, and height of it; it will take little, even a look, or a glance of the foul's eye that fees not clearly; according to that memorable word, Pfal. xxxiv. 5. " They looked to him, and were lightened." The more that fouls look to Christ, their eye grows the clearer. It will take an honeftly willing mind and hearty confent, though the ability be very little; a receiving, or a fincere minting at receiving of the offer: "Him that cometh," or is really a coming, though he be not vet come, at least as he thinks, but is, with the prodigal, still (as he apprehends) afar off, "will Christ and grace in no case cast out;" for no fooner doth spiritual life stir in faith's weakest acting and moving towards Christ, but grace meets it. 5. It stands on no concomitants. Though there should be many idols and lusts raging in the person, if there be a real confenting by faith to the bargain, with a fincere resolution to abandon all these, grace will not fend him away empty: or, if the man fay, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;" that is a done bargain: nay, were it to come with many spiritual issues and sores running, and with fear to prefume, and, as it were; to steal a hint of Christ, not to speak a word to him, but to touch him; he will not be angry nor upbraid, but will fay, "Go in peace, thy faith hath made thee whole." We may ask yet further, to the recommendation of grace, (1.) Was there ever a merchant that came to the market with that purpose, to buy on its own terms, that went away empty and without wares? If all the congregation of the first-born were put to it, they would be ready to bear witness, that grace never stood with them on any qualification in them, when they came honestly. (2.) I would ask, Was there ever any that adventured honeftly on it, whom it mifgave; that hazarded, (to speak so) and yet fell by the way; or that ever repented themselves that they hazarded and entrusted their fouls to this bargain? (3.)

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Let me alk. Was there ever any that took hold on and gripped it, in whose hand it brake? The bargain and covenant is everlasting, the mercies are fure mercies: once fure, and always fure; once rich, and for ever fo: it was and is a "covenant well ordered in all things, and fure." Bleffed for ever be the Contriver and Surety thereof. Some may possibly think, that this doctrine looks to be fomewhat lax or loofe: but fure grace is not lax; for, as we may fay of God's power, " Is any thing too hard for him?" -So we may fav of his grace, " Is any thing too free for it?" Only abuse not grace, prostitute it not, turn not your back on it, neither turn it to wantonnels. If ye look on grace, and cheapen only, and do not buy; or if ye bid for one piece of it only, and not for all; we unto you, that ever it was offered unto you. What would ve be at? Is it not holinefs, heaven, and happinefs, and that freely? They are here: is it Christ, and Christ freely, and all that is his? He is here in your offer: what means then this whining (to speak fo) and standing fo much on terms, as if the way of grace were a hard, untoward, unpassable way, and as if God were a hard Maker? Nav, it is a good, foft, fweet, eafy way, and plain to them that walk in it; and God, the best Mafter that either rich or poor ferved, and the easiest to ferve, and the best to please, where there is fincerity and willingness to live honestly: he pities and spares all upright-hearted fervants, "as a father pitieth his children, and a man spareth his son that serveth him." And, if any think they find it otherwise, it is most certainly their own fault. Therefore, I befeech you, study, 1. To be in case to take grace's wares home with you, repentance, faith, hope, love, mortification, meekness, patience, &c. These things are in the covenant betwixt Christ and you, and set to sale in the market .- 2, Be making ready, for the market is ready: many floops, as it were, are opened, and much precious ware laid out; bring empty veffels, and not a few, that ye may carry them away full, that ye may

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take a rich loading home with you. Though you take up never so much of this ware, it will never be missed, nor grow the less. And indeed it is a part, and a confiderable part of our preparation for the communion, to be rooted in the faith of thefe great things, and to get our affections firetched, dilated, and widened to receive them; to get "the everlasting doors caft up, that the King of glory may come in;" that, when he calls for entry, the doors may be opened at the very first knock. 3. If so be your desires be stirred up, and your appetites quickened in any measure, there is nothing that will more effectually and powerfully ftir them up, provoke, and fharpen them, than grace believingly looked to, and improved. Longing to fee his power and glory, as they have been feen by his people in the fanctuary, would notably make way for him. Pleading and working with your own hearts alone, will not do the bufiness, but grace employed and made use of will do it effectually and to purpose; and, the more grace you draw forth out of Christ's fulness, and drink, fo much the better: it will be (to speak fo) no forestalling of the market; neither will the fweet favour of the perfume be the weaker or less to-morrow, that we break the box of this precious ointment to-night. Now, God himself, who proclaims the fair, fets the market, and exposeth the rich ware to fale, give you wisdom to prove wife merchants, to your eternal advantage and upmaking. was a plane, worth and the part of the first hand on the

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On PSAL. lxxxv. 8.

He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

It is hard to know, in spiritual exercises, whether it be more difficult to attain some good frame, or to keep and maintain it when it is attained; whether more feriousness is required for making peace with God, or for keeping of it when made; whether more diligence should be in preparing for a communion, or more watchfulness after it: sure, both are required; and it was our bleffed Lord's word, Mat. xxvi. 41. after the first celebration of this his supper, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Here that faying holds eminently, Non minor est virtus, quam quævere, parta tueri. No less virtue and valour is requifite to maintain, than to make a purchase or conquest.

In the words (to leave the introduction and fcope) there are, I A great mercy promised from the Lord to his people, viz. "He will speak peace to them." 2. A special caveat and advertisement given them, pointing at their hazard, "But let them not turn again to folly:" That is, let not his people and faints, to whom he hath spoken peace, return to fin; let them beware of bourding and dallying with God's mercy, and of turning his grace into wantonness, of cooling in their affections to him, of flipping back to

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their old way, and of embracing their old lovers and idols; for that is folly, even in folio, to speak so.

We shall first propose fix observations from the words, and then apply them. First then, observe, "That fin against God is an exceeding great folly; it is the foolishest and maddest thing in the world " Therefore it is here called folly, to wit, in an eminent way and degree. It is that which doth most, yea, that which doth in effect only mar and interrupt faints peace. That which, ver. 2. is called iniquity, which he fo graciously pardoned, is here called folly, because of the folly and madness that is in fin: and it is on this ground and account, that the finner is fo often called a fool, and fimple, in the book of Proverbs; and Eph. v. the apostle exhorts Christians to " walk not as fools, but as wife:" and, Luke xv. the prodigal is faid, when converted, to "come to himfelf," as if he had been in a distraction and beside himself, all the while he was going on in his finful way. This may be further clear, if we look, 1. To the vanity of the matter wherein men fin. Is it not folly for a man to fit tippling and debauching away his time, to be given to harlotry and filthiness, to neglect prayer, to curfe and fwear, to let his mind rove upon things that never were nor will be, and wherein there is no profit? There is a great vanity in the matter of fin. 2. If we look to the fad effects and bitter fruits of fin, and to the great prejudice that comes by it, it will be found to be desperate madness, dear-bought pleasure, which is but fancied and imaginary, and no real pleafure; it mars the life of grace and of peace with God, and " treasures up wrath against the day of wrath :" See this verified eminenly in Ahithopel, that prodigy of profound policy (" whose counsel in those days, with David and Abfalom, was, as if one had inquired at the oracle of God,") the upfhot of whose deep wit was rank folly, when he went and hanged himself: see it also convincingly made good, in the rich man in the gospel, to whom it is fadly, surprisingly faid, "Thou

fool, this night thy foul shall be taken from thee, and whose then shall those things be?" And what advantage or wisdom is it. I pray, for a man to "gain the whole world, if he lofe his own foul?" O madly foolish bargain! 3. If we look to fin with a spiritual eye, we will fee folly in the very appearance and manner of it; a wicked man in finning is foolish-like, or looks as like a fool, as David did, when he played the madman before the king of Gath, " fcrabbling on the doors, and let his spittle fall on his beard." Is it not folly to fee a man " labouring in the fire for very vanity, loading himself with thick clay, pursuing the east wind?" He is just like a man in a frenzy, who imagines himself to be a king, and to be riding in great state and triumph, when in the mean time he is a poor, naked, pitiful, and despicable creature, in the eyes of all that behold him. 4. If we look to the fpring, fountain, and cause of it, there can be no just nor relevant reason given for fin; it is therefore, no doubt, folly. Is there, or can there be any thing that evidenceth men's folly fo much, as their coming in tops with God, their walking in the way of death, their loving simplicity, (as it is Prov. i.) and their quitting the way of life? Now, the word of God is true wifdom, and the way of life is therein clearly holden forth, and God as our pattern; and is there any thing more reasonable, than that we should live like, and be conform to the word of God, and to him of whom we ought to be followers? But fin differs with the whole word of God, and with God himfelf.

Take this passing word of use: Study to be established in the faith of this truth, That sin, whether in doing that which is evil, or in the omission of duty, is the greatest folly. Such of you as will not be convinced of it now in time, within a sew days or years ye shall be convinced of it to purpose, and to your eternal prejudice; the most blackish shall then see it to be folly, as highly hurtful, prejudical, shameful folly, and desperate madness; the rich glutton and Ahitho-

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phel, and thousands more of worldly wise men, find it to be so, to their cost, in hell: therefore the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 21. "What profit have ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" And, had we spiritual eyes to discern the condition of the most part of men and women, who evidently lie still in black nature unrenewed, who slight the offers of grace, and who will not receive Jesus Christ; the veriest idiot in the world would not be a sadder spectacle to us, nor affect our hearts with more pity and compassion than the lamentable case of the souls of such persons would; because "they forsake their own mercy, the sure mercies of David, and sollow after lying vanities," and weary themselves with a vain pursuit after that which

cannot profit them. Alas! for this folly.

Secondly, Observe, " That, notwithstanding the greatness of this folly, God's people and faints were sometimes deep, yea, even drowned in it, and are yet in part taken with it." Needs this any proof! "Ah! finful nation, (faith the Lord to his professing people, Isa. i. 4.) a people laden with iniquity, a feed of evil doers: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people doth not know:" O beaftly Israel! inferior to the very brutes through the folly of finning against God; and faith he, Jer. ii. "Be aftonished, O heavens, and horribly afraid; for my people have committed two great evils, they have fortaken me the fountain of living waters, and digged to themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water." O egregious folly and lamented choice! How many professors of religion are there, who are foolish virgins? and how many foolish practices are there among the godly themselves? Let it not then be thought strange (as a word of use from it) that not only among external professors, but even among real faints, there be found many acts of folly; though I grant it to be both fad and flumbling when it is; which should, therefore, fo much the more make them guard against the fame.

Thirdly, Observe, " God will sometimes speak peace to them that are given to folly, or are often found playing the fool." Of the truth whereof, as many as ever heard in the gospel, and did partake of the grace of it, and are before the throne, and hope to be there, are fo many proofs, witnesses, and living monuments. I shall clear what this " speaking of peace," is, in three fleps: He speaks peace to them, 1. In his offering of peace to them, and by his meeting and treating with them in and by that offer, in his treating or inviting them earnestly to come to him, who have wearied themselves and spent their labour on that which profits not; preffing them to return, and affuring them that he will heal their backflidings, Ifa. lv. Jer. iii. Hof. xiv. and preaching peace through Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. connselling them to come and buy eye-falve of him, &c., and by his knocking and waiting at their door, for admittance and entry, Rom. iii. Are not these words of peace to a foolish church? 2. In making peace with some, when (as it is, 2 Cor. v. 20.) he not only prays and requests them to be reconciled, but really reconcileth them to himfelf, and faith, " Peace be to you; pardoneth fin, taketh away the hand-writing of ordinances that was against them," giving them a discharge of their debt; that, when their " fin is fought for, it is not to be found, because he hath pardoned it:" and Hof. ii. this is called an alluring, or (as the word is) a speaking to the heart. 3. In his not only taking away the controversy, and making peace; but in his intimating that peace, faying to the pardoned finner, "Thy fins are forgiven thee,. go in peace, I am thy falvation." And then the promile, John xiv. 21, 23, is fulfilled, when Christ breaks open doors, and comes in and fups, and dwells, his Father and He; and one main dish that is fet on the table (to fay fo) is peace, as ver. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." It is peace from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoft. There are some special times wherein God speaks peace,

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fuch as folemn treating times and communion days; and other special occasions are, when there hath been more than ordinary diligence in prayer, more than ordinary sorrow for fin, peace is readily spoken on the back of it; as also, trying and fadly exercising times are usually times of the intimation of peace. In a word, when and where his gospel comes, and is made lively, peace follows on it; and this is your time. O that peace may be found to have been spoken to many at this occasion!

Fourthly, Observe, "That in and about those times, when God hath spoken for very urgently offered to speak) peace, there is often some restraint on people, as to the prevailing of their folly." Some stop to the current of iniquity in its wonted manner and measure, in fome more, and in fome less; fome more awe of God readily being on people then: many will have a fort of righteoufness, like a "morning-cloud and early dew, that foon paffeth away;" fome tickling of their affections, that quickly evanisheth; as the Lord faith of may of the Jews, that were hearers of John, who " was a burning and a flining light, that they rejoiced in his light for a feafon." So Pfal. cvi. 12. " Then believed they his words, they fang his praise; but they foon forgat his works, they waited not for his counfel." And, Pfal. lxxviii. 34. "When he flew them, then they fought him: nevertheless they flattered him with their lips, and lied to him with their tongues; for their hearts were not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant." And fomething of this was also even in Christ's hearers, and in the Galatians, who at first "would have plucked out their eyes, and given them to Paul:" So in the parable of the fower, fome feed fprings up, and hath a fair appearance, but foon withereth; and other fome holds out: so likewise at fasts and communions, affections will be readily somewhat stirred and warmed, and there will be many brave purposes and resolutions, fuch as were in the people, Exod. xix. when

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they said, "All that the Lord commands, we will do." And they look demure and grave-like, for two or three days: the tippler keeps some days from the tavern; he that prayed not in secret, nor in his samily, will, it may be, pray for some time about and after such occasions; others will go surther on: and yet it is but some restraint on their sin, or some fit and slash of affection, that is transient and quickly gone; and "they turn again to solly." And even the godly themselves are here often found in a great measure

guilty, as the following note will clear.

Fifthy, Observe, "That even those people and faints, who have fometime been given to folly, to whom God hath spoken peace, and who have reftrained their folly for a time; thereafter may much fall back to folly again." The admonition here given, Let them not turn again to folly," supposeth this. This needs not much proof: if ye shall go through the faints recorded in fcripture, 'ye will find fad instances of it; David, after peace was spoken to him, falls into adultery and murder: Hezekiah, after a fweet word of peace was spoken to him, Isa. xxxviii. falls into the folly of pride and vain offentation, chap. xxxix. Peter, after peace spoken to him, denieth his Master: Jehoshaphat, after peace spoken to him, fell once and again into the same sin, and once even after he was reproved for it; as is clear, 2 Chron. xviii. xix. and xx. chapters. Or there may be a falling into fome other fins, or out of one fin into another; as it was with David: this may befall real faints, yea eminent faints, even pillars in the house of God. Was there not peace spoken to the disciples, in that sweet fermon, John xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters, and yet that fad word follows, "Ye all shall be offended because of me this night:" and Peter, to whom that fweet word was spoken, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," doth foully fall into folly quickly after, What then may befall the more common fort of profeffors, who know not what it is to stand before the

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least temptation? The reasons may be, 1. Because of this the devil falls prefently on, and feeks, as it were, with feven worse devils, to re-enter the soul, and busks this bait of the temptation, and presents it in a new shape; old courtiers, (to speak so) and lusts fet on, and essay what hearing they can get. 2. Because, though by peace spoken, temptations and corruptions may be bound up, yea, and somewhat mortified; yet they are not flain outright; they may lurk for a time, but still And, 3. Because his people are ready in such a warm fun-blink to grow, as it were, wanton, and under such a ceffation from their lusts, to cast by their arms, to grow fecure, to grow fomewhat too fain, and to dream of an easy life. Thus it was in a measure with David, as he confesseth, Pfal. xxx. "I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved." If they get peace for a little, who but they? " They are lords, (in a manner) and will not come unto him:" or, if they win to few tears, and some liberty, they are readily puffed up, and in some fort bid their souls take them rest; as if they needed to trouble themselves no more. Therefore there are new onfets, and the Lord lets them fee how vain they are, even in their best estate; as we may perceive in the Lord's dealing with Hezekiah, and with David, in that Pfal. xxx. " Thou didft hide thy face, (faith he) and I was troubled." O what folly, vanity, and outbreaking of corruption do often follow on the back of a feeming work of turning to God, and a tender-like frame in professors of religion! So, Pfal. cvi. it is faid, that "they provoked him at the sea, even at the Red-sea:" even where and when they were in such a frame, that " they believed his words, and fang his praises; they foon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsel:" which was, in a manner, at the very table to "lift the heel against him." And O how fad and lamentable a thing is it, to be unwatchful after a communion, and an offer or an intimation of peace!

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Sixthly, Observe, " That there is nothing more called for from a people, who have been given to folly, and have had peace spoken to them, than to take heed that they turn not again to folly;" to take heed that they fall not into the fame fins that they feemed to have abandoned and turned away from; that it be not with them, according to the true proverb, "The dog is returned to his vomit, and the fow that was washed. to her wallowing in the mire," as it is, 2 Fet. ii. 22, Under which similitude the apostl peowerfully disfuades professors of religion from returning again to fin, by thewing the loathfomeness of it; it being as abominable as a man's licking up that again which he hath vomited. This then is the duty that the Lord calls for; I. That you should abstain from the fins that you have been given to, fuch as tippling, drunkenness, swearing, fabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer, and the like, and do fo no more; not only not to relapse into the same fins, but that ye abstain from every other sin: it is not enough that a man break off from one fin, and take up with another; it is not fufficient, though a man will not be drunk in his neighbour's house, if in the mean time in his own house he tipple, play the good-fellow, (as ye call it) and mif-spend his time. 2. Ye should consider what engagements and resolutions ye have come under, and that ye fall not back from them, In a word, it is, Not to be as ye were wont to be; and that ye be found in no known fin, nor defective in any known duty.

We come now to the more particular and close application of the whole, in these two uses. The first whereof is for advertisement and warning, "Let him that stands, take heed lest he fall:" let him not look on himself as incapable to be taken off his seet. Alas! persons may be in a manner exalted to heaven, and in a very good frame, in their own imagination and apprehension, and it may be in some measure really; and yet be brought back to the puddle and mire again, after they have shaken themselves and come out of it.

In prolecuting this, we shall, r. Shew wherefore we press it : and, 2. Wherein, or in reference to what we prefs it. 1000) in the case of the control of the c

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As for the first, viz. Wherefore it is that I do press this advertisement; and indeed it is not without very good ground, as ye will eafily perceive, if, 1. Ye look to, and confider the best saints, and in their best condition; how foon are they even taken off their feet? Was not David often in a very good spiritual condition? and yet, how foon and foully did he fall into folly? Was not Adam in a good and defirable condition, when there was no quarrel betwixt God and him, nor any ground for it? and yet how foon was he ensnared? Was not Peter in a good state and frame, when Christ faid to him, " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; flesh and blood hath not revealed that unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven?" and yet, within a very little, he turns again fo far to folly, as to be the devil's instrument to tempt Christ; as is clear from Mat. xvi. 17. compared with ver. 22. Were not the disciples in a good condition, when our Lord had preached to them both the preparation and thankfgiving fermons, before and after the communion? and yet "they all were offended because of him, and forsook him and fled," and that very quickly, even that very fame night. Now, when fuch tall cedars fall, what need have we, who are in comparison filly shrubs, and but as small straw, to take warning? 2. If we consider that those fins and falls were often exceeding sudden, the fame night, in the disciples, (as I just now hinted) and in Hezekiah, very quickly after his recovery, exceeding foul, and exceeding universal, as in all the difciples; fometimes repeated, as in Lot, Jehoshaphar, and Peter; fometimes a plurality and variety of them joined together, as in David and Afa, and in his people at the Red-sea and in the wilderness: and who knows but the same very night that ye were at the Lord's table, some of you were back at your folly? and others of you before night, may be. We faid,

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not only suddenly but foully as is clear in Adam, who, when be had no corruption formerly, fell from God to the devil: (and, by the way, many of you are to grafily ignorant; and wafully felf-conceited, that ye think, if ye had been in his case, ye would not have done (o.) And (as I hinted) what foul faults were David's adultery and murder, and Solomon's idolatry, at least his tolerating it, after "God had spoken twice to him?" What a foul fault and fall was that of Ifrael's, after their to toleron engagements, and fair undertakings, Exod, xix, when within forty days they detestably and damnably danced before the golden calf? and what a foul fall was that of Peter's, to forfwear Christ, by denying him with an oath? and of the rest of the disciples, unkindly and unworthily to forfake him and flee? And who knows but, shortly after this occasion, many of you that have been tipplers, may grow worfe, it may be, even to be found flaggering in the streets? and that others of you, who prayed not before, may be heard curling? Ye who are believers and faints indeed, should observe this, and know that there is need, great need of "watching and prayer, that we enter not into temptation:" and if there hath been any idleness, lightness, vanity, mis-spending of precious time, or the like; guard, O guard against those. The reason why believers fall so often in gross fins, is their playing, as it were, with their petty idols; little things, given way to, lead on to greater and worfe. 3. Am I now speaking of any strange, uncouth, or unprecedented thing? Have we never observed, how ye carried and behaved after communions before? Can ve fay, but that, as many communions as ye have been at, there have been as many breaches? If ye have never failed before, ye may be fecure now; but, if ye have failed and miscarried formerly, be the more wary and watchful now. 4. Have ye any knowledge of, and acquaintance with your own hearts? Is your corruption dead? Are your idols quite flain? or are they not rather like to those strange wives, in Ne112

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hemiah's time, (who were put away), crying on you for pity, (Q cruel pity!) and weeping on you to be admitted to come home again? And have none of you so much foolish, fond, and cruel pity, as to fide with them? Hath a communion day throst out the devil fully? Are there no living lufts, no strong corruptions within you? Do we not fee what a ready welcome temptations to fin are like to get? and find ve not a woful propenlity to be glad that the restraint and awe-band of a communion day is over and by? and doth not this press you to watch? 3. Try but how it hath been with you fince the fabbath: Is not the bent ye had then, already very much flacked? Is not much of that feeming, or really good frame of spirit gone? Is not the great part of your work yet before you? And is it not a greater difficulty, to make out an engagement, than that to make it; to perform, than to promise? How is it then, that ye have, in a great part, laid by your arms, as if all were done? when ye have, as foldiers, put yourselves in battle array, and given your military oath, and gotten the fign and word of command, should you quit your post? beware of that; the matter is of greater concernment than ye are aware of: ye are yet but in a manner be-

For the second thing, viz. What it is wherein, or in reference to what we do press your taking warning, and being wary: and here I would have you, 1. To be aware not only of more gross fins, but even of all such things in general, which temptations use ordinarily to make their aproaches and assaults by; as namely, little sins; (little, I mean comparatively) "Is it not a little one?" saith Lot of Zoar. O how unsuitable was it for him, to whom the Lord had but a very little before spoken such a great and gracious word of peace, as that, "Depart, for I can do nothing so long as thou art here:" and yet the same night, or the morrow, this escapes him! And readily, when people fall once, they fall over and over again; but ye should

beware to feek leave to lurk and lour a while in fuch Zoars: beware to fay, It is a little fin; fay not, I shall not be drunken, but I must have leave to tipple and trifle over the time. The devil driveth fin and temptation, as a carpenter drives a wedge; he will teach and prompt you to fay, We may be cheerful and foort us a while, without regard to the matter, meafure, or feafon, though ye be not profane: but once let in the point of the wedge by a little fin, and it may become a great one ere all be done, or a groffer one may follow, even as the great end of the wedge doth the leffer. 2. Beware of returning to omissions: some, it may be, will resolve that they will never tipple, nor fwear, nor commit any fuch things; but they will, it may be, neglect and omit to pray as they have, belike, done these few days past: though they go not abroad to the tavern on the week days, nor go idle in the fields on the Lord's day, yet they may mif-spend and trifle away their time at home; as if falling back into omiffions, were not a turning again to folly, as well as falling back to commissions. The confessions of many poor creatures (who become publicly and prodigiously scandalous) on their death-beds, or on a scaffold, that omissions of duty have predisposed them to, and brought on those gross commissions, may and should awake and alarm us: ye should therefore, with holy Job, " make a covenant with your eyes," and other fenses, and make conscience to keep it. 3. Beware of falling back to a fecure coldrife manner of going about duties of worship, alone or in company, in public or in private: let none of you think with yourselves, that, now this solemnity is over, ye need not wrestle in prayer, nor watch so strictly over your heart, but let it gad and rove, and not hedge it in on an ordinary Lord's day, as on a communion Lord's day; fince there is no liberty allowed for an idle word or thought any day, more than there is on that day: think it not enough that ye fay your prayers morning and evening, and that none can charge you with any

offence : God, the all-feeing God, observes you, whether you be univerfal, fincere, and ferious in the duties of religion. 4. Beware of neglecting spiritual and gospel duties; such as, self-examination or self-searching, felf-denial, mortification, and use-making of Christ; the neglect of these, and the like, may be fome way called gospel folly. It is no doubt great gospel folly, when Christ (being freely and fully offered therein) is not improved for wildom, righteoufnels, fanctification, and redemption; when the power of godliness is not aimed at in duty, but people reft and fit down under a form thereof, which yet in some respect is more cumbersome than the power; for Christ improved makes all things go easily with us: therefore, any of you who have looked on it as folly to neglect these spiritual duties, see that ye return not again to that folly. c. Beware of unbelief: have ye not resolved to cast out with that evil, and resolved to be more jealous of God, though ye should meet with difficulties? Believers in Christ, lick not up that vomit again, "turn not again to folly," to which there is a fecret natural bentness of heart : if (I say) unbelief and jealoufy be a folly, take it not up, turn not to it again. 6. Beware of heart-ills. Possibly ye will not give way any more to gross evils, and yet suffer your fouls to be carried away after idols, or after vain, proud, ambitious, covetous, revengeful, filthy, and lascivious thoughts: but, if in very deed Christ get the heart, he must reign in it, and command the eye, tongue, ears, hands, feet, and all. 7. Beware of falling back to the inordinate love of the world, and of letting the heart be too much addicted and glued to even lawful pleasures and creature comforts, to your callings, wives, children, houses, lands, and incomes of gain and profit; from which there hath been possibly some suitable abstractedness these days past. Ye should not only abstain from oppressing, stealing, and deceiving; but ye should also guard against falling back to excessive pursuing after, aud, as it were, glutting your-

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felves with the things of this world, however lawful in themselves. Alas! primus licitis: inordinate love to, and immoderate pursuing after things lawful in themselves, destroy more souls than things finful and unlawful in themselves do. The excuses of those invited to the marriage of the King's Son, are founded, not on things simply finful, but on lawful things, the farm, oxen, and married wife. Now the house is fwept, and ye are in hazard, if ye guard not, to return to a greater and greedier feeding on vanities. I dare fay, there are multitudes of men and women, who never fo much hungered for the communion, as they have longed to have these folemn days over and by, that they might win back to their callings, worldly business, and pleasures. O what a weariness have they been to them! as facred folemnities were to those spoken of, Amos viii. 5. who cried, "When shall the new-moon be gone, that we may fell corn; and the fabbath-day, that we may let out wheat?" To many these days of fasting and spiritual feasting and communicating have been as a bridle-bit in their mouths. to restrain them from running on the mountains of their vanity; and who knows but, ere another communion come, the Lord may " feed you as a lamb in a large place?" STATISTICS OF THE

The fecond use is for exhortation. Would you then know the duty that ye are called unto? this is it, " Let not God's people and faints turn again to folly :" let not the idler return to his idleness, the tippler to his tippling, the scoffer to his scoffing; the ignorant, who have been at a little pains to learn fome questions before the examination and communion, to his negligence in feeking after knowledge, &c. Let not this be; if ve have vomited out these and other fins, lick them not up again. To press this use a little, we would, r. Give you some considerations from the text. 2. Some directions to help you forward in the practice of it.

elections participal after, and ask were, glutting your,

For the first, viz. Some confiderations from the text to press it. 1. Is it not a folly to fin once? If so, fure it is much more to relapse into fin. Whether is it more true wisdom to abstain from those fins, or to fall back into them? Is it not more wisdom for you, who have been given to tippling or drunkenness, to neglect of prayer, and the like, now to let alone fin, and to give yourselves to prayer, than to be walking in the street on the plain-stones? Is it not more wisdom to be given to edifying discourse, than to be laughing and sporting over the time? Is it not better to come to the church, than to fpend the time idly, in discoursing and waiting for a temptation? And if your conscience assent to the truth of this, then we take witness in your conscience, that it doth so; and this instrument of witness will stand on record against you, if ye shall return to those fins and to this folly again. 2. Have ye been examining yourselves? and do ye find, that much of your life hath been fpent in folly, by fome twenty, by fome thirty, by fome forty, by fome fifty, by fome fixty years; and every day's account cast up amounts only to folly, vanity, and madness? And is it not enough, and may it not fuffice you, that ye have spent so long time in folly, though ye fpend no more fo? 3. Hath not God been speaking peace to some, and given them the intimation of it? fo that their fouls have been made to fay, "God is here:" and have they not gotten the bargain closed, and the hand-writing that was against them torn? We hope there are some such among us. Nay, are there any, but the Lord hath been offering peace to them, treating with them, faying, " Behold me, behold me!" intreating and requesting them to be reconciled? And hath there not been some tickling of the affections of many? If fo, will ye be fuch fools as to fall back, and to wear out the sense of that peace and warmness that any of you have win to? And ye with whom God hath been meeting and treating about the pardon of fin, what a folly will it be, in place of get-

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ting a discharge, to increase and multiply your debt? a. Are there not fome engagements on you? Or. whatever be real, is there not a profession of coming under engagements? Are not the vows of God on fome of you? Is there not fome fin that hath flared you in the face, which we have resolved to abstain from? And hath there not been forme flirring and tickling of defires to perform what ye have refolved and engaged to? And will ve break all these bands? Will ye repent and rue that ever ye engaged to God? If fo, as ye notably play the fools, fo the Lord will be about with you, and even fpew you out of his mouth, that ye may puddle your fill in the mire of fin. 5. Is there not a great bentness and propensity in all naturally to turn again to folly? Is there not "an evil heart of unbelief, ready to depart from the living God?" I have so much charity for you, as that you will grant this; and when the Lord hath faid, Watch, and tells that " he is at hand that betrays you," will ye go fecurely, and not take warning? O what desperate folly would this be! 6. Consider what will come of it, if ye shall fall back, if ye slacken your bent, and growing cold, turning again to folly? Ye will wear out any bit of good frame that ye have obtained: ye will blur and fully the real or supposed clearness of your interest, mar your peace, and become in a manner more beaftly and fwinish in your finful way than before; at the very thoughts whereof your hearts should fear, naufeate, and even grow fick. And what will be the upfliot thereof? Either ye will repent, or never repent: if ye fay, ye will repent; are ye fure that God will give you repentance, if ye shall hazard on some fin? Are not many given up to hardness of heart, who never come to repentance? Know we what repentance is? have ye not been already effaying and doing somewhat at repentance, and have ye not found it difficult and hard to come by? And, if ye shall sin yet more, will not yet repentance be more difficult and hard work? And, suppose ye should get repentance,

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ve shall know the truth of that faying, Jer. ii. " That it was an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the living God, and that his fear was not before your eyes." O what shame and confusion of face will it bring with it, to remember that we had so many warnings from the word without, and fo many convictions and challenges from our confcience within, and that yet we went over them, and with a high hand went on in our folly! Will those things be little, think ye? What pleasure or profit can ye have in "those things, whereof ye will be ashamed?" Yea, suppose ye come to repentance (and a hundred to one if ever ye come to it), ye shall weep and mourn bitterly, that ever ye hazarded fo on fin, over your light and convictions, and over the belly of your conscience. If ye get not repentance (as I am afraid many never fhall) what will come of it? Convictions and challenges will wear out; the heart will grow harder; you will go on laughing at reproofs, mocking at exhortations to repentance and reformation, and regardlefsly treading on what might reclaim you; you will he angry at them who brought you under any engagements; ye will become very Atheists in your hearts, and as fo many profane Heathens in your carriage: and when you have lived thus for a time, (and the Lord knows how long) will ye not come to die? will not your month come on you? will not your bed take you, or ye take your bed? and then the conscience will either awake or be filent: if it awake, will not this be your language, which is the language of many a wretched creature? Wo is me, I have mif-spent my time, and have been glutting myfelf with the world and finful pleasures. Oh vain world! O bewitching and beguiling world! Alas, that ever I was fo much taken up with it! And, if the conscience be quiet, what will come of it? Will that fin lie on, and not be fought account of? Know ye not, consider ye not that word, Gal. vi. " Be not deceived, God will not be mocked; as men fow, fo they shall reap?" Think ye that God will be inferior to the creature? will not your governor or landlord feek account of you according to your engagement; and shall not the Lord call you to a reckoning? Yea, certainly: and the conscience will then awake and roar on you; then the curse, wo, and damnation will seize upon, and take hold of your soul in death; and devils will carry it thither, where hypocrites are, until the judgment of the great day; and then ye will say, Turning again to sin was the greatest solly and madness: and thus, whether God has a purpose of repentance to you or not, ye shall one day rue it at all the veins of your heart (to speak so), and shall find the folly of it, and that to your everlasting prejudice

and lofs, if we repent not.

And therefore, let me press this use upon you, and earnestly exhort you to let these considerations fink down into your ears and hearts. Beloved, "we are jealous over you," and would God it were with a fuitable godly jealoufy! We are afraid that many, ere we be aware, be down in their former puddle, that ignorance and profanity be as rife as ever; there have been fo many fits and good appearances, and of fo fhort continuance heretofore: and now ye have been making fome mint; but what will come of it, if ye fall back? if these ordinances shall do you no good, we know not what will do it: I think ye were never nearer to some great crisis, to a nick of being lost or gained; we have you, as it were, " in the very place of the breaking forth of children," fo that now you must be either safely and fairly delivered, or prove abortives. Ah! are our fasts and communions to no purpose? Are all your purposes and resolutions, your engagements, and feeming willingness to engage, in vain and to no effect? If ye fall back after this, and turn again to folly. I do not expect that any ordinances or future engagements shall do you much good : we must either look for better and more fruit, or there will be more barrenness and stubbornness; either ve shall be more holy, or more of that old fin of malignity, floutII.

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ness of heart against God, and more opposition to godlinefs, shall bud amongst you: we would from our very fouls wish you brought well through, but are afraid there be a sticking. Why is it, I pray, that we insist so much with you, if we were not jealous over you? Will re have faces to hold up before God, when ye and we shall be reckoned with, if ye shall sit these warnings? or, what heart can we have to go about his fervice amongst you, if yet there be a sticking; and when there are some wrestling to get up the hill, as it were, and ye run further down than ever? O to be mightily helped of God ro travail in birth, to have Christ formed in you, and formed in you again! Is it probable, when many of you are brought further up than before, if ye fall further back, that ever ye will win up again? We apprehend, that there are many of you who shall never again, with fo much moral feriousness, be wrought upon, if there shall not be now some abiding and effectual work, but a "turning again to folly." It is not, beloved hearers, the fruit of one preaching or two, that we are now driving at; but the great scope of this blessed gospel: therefore, for Christ's fake, hold at it, come forward, and go not back; O "turn not again to folly!" elfe, be affured, that the Lord and your own consciences will bear witness, and we his fervants will also bear witness against you, (as many of you will bear witness against us if we shall do (o) if, after God hath spoken peace to you, ye. shall return again to folly. Let me yet add this one word further, for preffing this: Will ye but confider what we are feeking? is it not your real good and ad. vantage? is it any hard or unreasonable thing that we crave of you, or any uncouth thing, or any thing but that which Abraham, David, Paul, and others of the faints, were defirous and studious to be at, yea, and our bleffed Lord Jesus himself was content to be at? Though he was never tainted with folly, yet he was content and careful to fulfil all righteoulness; and what feek we of you, but that ye would feek and la

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bour to imitate him; that ye would prevent your own lofs and ruin, and give Christ a kindly and a hearty welcome, in order to the exercise of all his offices about you; that "his heart may be made glad, and that he may fee of the fruit of the travail of his foul to his fatisfaction," in the falvation of a number of fouls in Glasgow? O that we could get you prevailed with to be as ferious in these things, as we are in and for the things of this present life; and that we could get as great-vent (to speak fo) for Christ's precious wares amongst you, as a man would get for some rare commodity; nay, (may I, or shall I fay) but even for tobacco! Alas, that incomparably precious Jefus Chrift, and his purchase, the everlasting covenant, even "the fure mercies of David," should have less vent and fale, than that and an hundred other commodities have! this is a lamentation, and should be for a lamentation. Always let bygones be ferioufly reflected on, and fee that by all means ye " turn not again to folly."

As for the fecond thing proposed, viz. Some directions for preventing your turning again to folly: ye may take these few, and the Lord himself put them home with a strong hand. 1st, then, Walk in fear: " Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice before him with trembling." "The wife man fees the evil, but the fool passeth on, and is consident." There is a fort of spiritual pride, vanity, and self-conceit, reigning amongst ordinary professors, and too much of it prevailing amongst believers, that undoes them. Are there any of you afraid of fornication and adultery, or of turning giddy fectarians and the like? Your want of fear brings you into the mire ere ye be aware: " Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty mind before a fall." The little fear that is amongst the most part fays, that fome black turn (as we use to speak) is in their hands, or fome foul fall before them: hence the apostle, Philip. ii. 12. exhorts, "Work out the work of your own falvation with fear and trembling:" and,

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2 Cor. vii. 1. to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." adly, Observe well, and lay due weight on that exhortation of our Lord, Mat. xxvi. 4r. (which hath leveral directions in it) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:" look about you, be not fecure, stand by your post, lete nothing go out nor come in without strict examination, and seek, as it were, after its pass, and set, as it were, a sentinel at the port of every fense: "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch," faith the Lord, Mark xiii. 37. Be not fecure; watching is a most fuitable duty for Christ's foldiers: fail not to join with it much prayer, not for the fashion, but that which is in the Spirit, and fervent; yet lay no weight on it, as if ye could merit any thing by it, but go about it humbly and feriously, in order to the entertaining the life of grace; fit not up in it, but rather double your diligence. 3dly, Keep the heart well; heart-ills are the principal ills: "Keep (faith Solomon, Prov. iv.) the heart with (or above) all keeping:" fet your main force to guard it, for there Satan keeps his court and head quarters, and thence gives his orders to the outward fenfes: dally not with fin in the heart, else it will come a further length. 4thly, Forget not your engagements, but let the vows of God lie on you, and have due weight with you: let not the fins that ye discovered and saw in your felf-examination between God and you, before ye came to the communion table, be forgotten; but remember them, to repent of them, and to renounce them: and when one knot (to fay fo) of your engagement loofeth, cast another faster; or if a knot were weak, strengthen it, or cast a new one; for, as acts of faith must be renewed, so must acts of engaging to 5thly, Be much in the exercise of repentance for your bygone folly: " My fin (faith David, Pfal. li.) is ever before me." Think not repentance to bethe work of a day or two; look back and reflect on your old fins of tippling, fwearing, enmity at godliness, &c. For, if ye wear out of the exercise of repen-

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tance, ye will wear in piece and piece, on your old fins; against which repentance is a notable bar: being much in the exercise of repentance, keeps the heart fober and watchful, and loth to hazard on fin, and withal makes fin bitter; but the Antinomian way takes off all restraints, and looseth the reins to fin: it is much now to see a penitent; I wish there may be much repentance in fecret; but, for any thing that is feen, it is very rare. 6thly, In an especial manner, be much in improving the strength of Jesus Christ, to prevent your "turning again to folly." Do not undertake nor engage in your own strength, but believingly lay all the weight and firefs on your Surety; put his name in the bond, which he gave to God, for the debt of duty : " Abide in me, and I in you, so ye shall bring forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing," faith our Lord to his disciples, John xv. But how many fail and come short here, while they go about duties, and either quite misken, or make but very little use of Christ? Many know very little or nothing at all, what it is to make use of Christ, in order to their making of their peace with God; but O how very few know what it is to make use of his strength to enable them for duty, and to "go through the wilderness leaning on their Beloved!" 7thly, Defer not to make your resolutions and engagements practicable; there are many, alas! who think thame it should be faid, that a fermon had so much weight with them, as to make them alter and change their course at once: it may be, they will consent to be religious, but they must be allowed to come to it by degrees, and to creep to it by piece-mail; but beware of that, left it prove in the iffue to be a fhift of thy deceitful heart. Ponder these words well, Eccl. v. "Defer not to pay what thou hast vowed, for the Lord hath no pleafure in fools:" and, in the Holy Ghost's account, he is a fool that deferreth and putteth off one moment. O! delays are in a special manner dangerous here, and Satan will not fail to knit one

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delay to another. Sthly, Reject all temptations to fin and turning again to folly, with abhorrence; fay, with Ephraim, "What have I any more to do with idols?" Never think on them, but with indignation and holy disdain; for ye are undone, if ye but once listen to them. othly, Be often examining, if ye be like and answerable to your communicating, and to your promiles and engagements; many know not how it is with them, because they examine not. 10thly, Walk humbly in the fense of your weakness: trust not to your own heart; for he that doth fo is reputed to be a fool, by the Holy Ghost. 11thly, Be helping one another forward in you way to heaven: " Take heed (faith the apostle, Heb. iii. 12, 13.) that there be not in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, left any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of fin." To be edifying to others, would, through God's bleffing, be edifying to yourfelves, and help you to be in good cafe; to be pray. ing with them would ftir up yourfelves to more ferioutness in the exercise of that duty; to be reproving fin in them, would waken up more hatred of it in yourfelves; and to be much conversant in the duties of mutual edification with them that are warm in their love to Christ, to his interests and friends, and diligent in the study of holiness, would readily, through grace, ftir you up to feek after more love and more holiness; as he infinuates in that exhortation to the Christian Hebrews, chap. x. 24. " Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works." 12thly, and in a word, Endeavour to walk fuitably to your light: your own consciences will readily tell you that it is best to walk so, as ye may abstain from that which ye know to be fin; and to be doing and delighting in that which ye know to be duty. There are very few (if any) duties of religion, but they are one time or another, and many of them frequently laid before you, and not a few shall, I hope, have

cause of bleffing God eternally, that ever this gospel. light was made to thine fo clearly on them: but for fuch of you as " hold the truth of God in unrighteoufness." (as the apostle says some do, Rom. i.) or make a prisoner of it, by setting a guard of corrupt affections about it: " Whom God gave up to vile affections," and to all forts of most abominable filthiness, because, "though they knew that such things ought not to have been done, yet they not only did, but took pleafure in them that did them." I leave it with all the ferioufness I can win to, on you, and take instruments of witness in your consciences, that ye have had great offers, and have made fair mints, and come under, at least, seeming engagements: if ye have not done so, declare so much; but, fince we all profess that ye have engaged, and fome have really engaged, " not to turn again to folly," walk fuitably to your engagements, as ye would not have your consciences condemning your, and God, who is greater than your consciences, to condemn you. Many, I fear, have fleeping confciences, and that will not now speak to them; but the conscience of every one will speak at length, and not keep filence. We shall now fay no more, but pray that this word may be bleffed of God to you.

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SERMON VIII.

These five following Sermons were all preached about the time of the Communion; the first four within a very few days before it, as it gradually approached; the fifth after it.

On JER. 1. 4, 5.

In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah to-gether, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

The repairing and making up of a breach betwirt God and a people, is a matter of greatest moment and concern; and, when men are serious in it, O how uptaking is it to them! Which is holden out to the life in these words, that lay before us very clearly the frame and carriage of a people, which formerly have dealt loosely and deceitfully in the matter of their covenant with God, when they come, through his grace, to be serious and in good earness in the upmaking of it again.

As for the people spoken of here, they are Israel and Judah, the Lord's own covenanted people, who had dealt falsely and foully in the covenant, and had thereby procured sad strokes to themselves, and had divided and separated themselves from God, and one of them from another; which division and separation

continued lamentably long. They are both here reprefented as coming home together, seriously endeavouring to amend and make up the breach betwixt God

and them, and among themselves.

As for the time that this relates to, ("In those days, and in that time, faith the Lord,") it looks literally. and according to the cohesion, to Babylon's destruction, and the Lord's bringing down the Babylonish monarchy by the Persian king, Cyrus; in which time the people of God had some liberty to return to their own land: vet, confidering the great scope of the words, and that this liberty of the Jews is in a great part fulfilled in Chrift, and that the union spoken of here, is fuch as hath in it the gathering together of all the tribes; and withal, that the covenant which they enter into with the Lord Christ, is such as " shall never be forgotten." We must extend the words to their " ingrassing again into their own olive; when all Israel fhall be faved," and they shall be graffed into their own root and stock, from off which they were broken. As for the scope, it is partly to encourage the Jews; this being not only a promife of their return, but also (and mainly) of their repentance, and of their friend-Asip and reconciliation with God, and with one another. "In those days," they that had been far from him, and bufy vexing one another, " fliall come, and come together:" their work and business in coming, is " to feek the Lord;" and the manner of it is, " going weeping," praying and repenting: and, although the way be fomewhat dark, and not fo difcernible to them; yet they go on, " asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." They ask how they may come to him, worship God again aright, and perform the duties of a people inchurched to, and in covenant with him; and, as it were, from one post or town to another, they ask the way, and get direction from one day to another, and from one duty to another; and their defign in all is, Come, fay they on the matter, we were once in covenant with God, and with one

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another, but we have been unfaithful in both; now let us amend and make up the breach in both: "Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten:" let us renew our covenant with God, and let it be done firmly and furely, fo as it may not be broken again. This looks and hath respect to Jer. xxxi. 31, &c. and xxxii 39, 40. where the Lord promifed to " make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah!" cited by the apostle, Heb viii. and it is called, chap. xxxii. "An everlasting covenant:" which is not so much to be understood of mere external covenanting, as of faving, sharing in, and partaking of Christ's righteousness for the pardon of fin; and of their engaging to God, in his own strength, to be forthcoming in the fruits of faving grace and holiness in their practice. This is, in fum, the way and courfe which they take; and is a fhort directory for what should be a people's carriage, when they would make up the breach of a broken covenant with God.

As for the particular scope of this place, as it relates to Israel and Judah's returning together, we shall not insist in it: yet from these words we may see, First, That "there is good ground for us to expect the Lord's bringing back his scattered people, the Jews, and their ingrassing again into their own olive." The same God that persuaded Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem, can persuade Shem to dwell in the tents of Japhet. As they minded us Gentiles, as a little sister, and were holily solicitous what they might do for us, we ought in gratitude to mind them as the elder sister, that they may turn again to the Lord; who hath given us his faithful word for it, which cannot fail, but must be sulfilled.

Secondly, We fee, That "heart-melting towards God, and feriousness to make up the breach of a broken covenant betwixt a people and him, conduce natively to make the hearts of those that have been divided and set at variance from one another, in much

warmness of love to unite, and fweetly to join toge. ther." It is from this, that Ifrael and Judah " become one flick in the Lord's hand," Ezek. xxxvii. This makes them as melted metal, to run close together, as it were, into one lump: though it was a long continued schism, and had much bitterness attending it; yet, when their hearts are touched with a fense of fin, and of a broken covenant, their former differences and animolities evanish. Softness of heart, in the sense of bygone fin, would filence many things among us that all disputings, writings, and printings, will not be able to do. Pray for this to the land, as the most effectual mean and way of curing our divisions, and of uniting us in the Lord. It joins Judah and Ifrael together, whose breach was much greater, and of far longer continuance than ours.

Thirdly, We see here, That "a people's joining and running together in serious seeking of the Lord, is very commendable and lovely, and a good token and evidence to them of their turning to God, and of God's accepting of them:" even as bitterness and division is exceeding displeasing to God, and prejudical to themselves, and to the work of grace in them. This is an happy-like, hopeful, and promising day of repentance and turning to God, that bodeth much, un-

speakably much good to a land and people.

But we come to confider the words as they do direct unto, and chalk out the way for a people returning to make up a broken covenant with God, which is the scope. And we may take it up in these three, 1. As it respects the frame of their hearts: and O what a tender, humble, warm, and mournful frame are they represented to be in! "They shall come and go together," exciting one another, "going and weeping, with their faces towards Zion" 2 As it respects and holds forth the great design they have, and that is, to renew and make sure the covenant betwixt God and them: though it was now broken, and they want not challenge for it; yet they do not say, We will never

enter in it again, because we brake it the last time we made it; but, Come, (say they) let us make it the more firm and stable. 3. As it respects and holds out their posture, and the way which they take in pursuing this design: there is a going and weeping, and praying too, and seeking of the Lord; in a word, they seek and endeavour to renew their covenant with God, seriously, diligently, and humbly: and thus they pursue their design.

First then, If we look to their frame, we will find implied in it, 1. A guilty condition. 2. A challenging and convinced condition. 3. A repenting condition; they are kindly affected with the wrongs done to God, and defire and use means to have them righted.

We shall name two or three general doctrines from this first consideration of the word, though in effect it will fall in with the last. The first whereof is this, that God's covenanted people may deal foully and falsely in his covenant: for their coming to renew the covenant, supposeth that they had broken it; and it is also implied in their mourning and weeping, and saying, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." This needs no further proof than the history of God's people's dealing with him; which holds out clearly and convincingly the strong propension and bent of heart that is naturally in them to backslide, and like a deceifful bow, to turn aside and to prove unstedsast in his covenant.

Secondly, There is here implied a distance betwixt God and them, following on the breach of covenant: their going to feek the Lord, saith, that he is a feeking; this is very fad, yet most true, "That sin, and unsaithful dealing in God's covenant, will make a separation betwixt him and a people in covenant with him." Thus it is said, Isa. ix. 1. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God." It is very like, that many

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believe not this, that fin hath fuch influence in making feparation betwixt God and finners; but in that day, when an eternal feparation shall be made betwixt God and them, it will be undeniably made known and manifest, when many of you, that now throng to the ordinances, will, if grace prevent not, meet with that sentence, (O dreadful sentence!) "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you."

Thirdly, There is here their fentibleness of both thefe, 1. That they had broken covenant. 2. That God had separated himself, and withdrawn his prefence from them for their breach of covenant. Though fin be very evil, and the want of God's presence very fad; yet they had this good, that they were kindly fentible of both: whence we may observe, "That conviction of bygone wrongs done to God, and kindly refenting of his absence, are the first rifes and springs of repentance and turning to God:" or, they are " the first steps of conversion." What is it, I pray, that all this business and stir among this people flows from? Here it is, First, They apprehend a quarrel betwixt God and them; and next, They apprehend a distance: and this puts them ferioufly to mind turning to God with weeping and supplications, and to renew their covenant, for recovering of God's presence: this same is the Spirit's method, John xvi. "I will (faith the Lord Christ) send the Spirit:" and the first thing he doth is this, "He convinceth the world of fin:" fo Acts ii. 37. the first thing that ever (to speak so) turned the chace in Peter's hearers was, that " they were pricked in their hearrs" for fin; and this did put them to an advisement, and to cry out, "Men and bre-thren, what shall we do?" And indeed there is a neceffity of this, confidering the Lord's way of adminiftering his grace: for, so long as persons are not convinced of their fin, they are not apprehensive of a quarrel; but conviction of fin makes them apprehenfive of it, and to think that they would be obliged to any who would relieve them out of that fad condition.

And, while God is absent and not missed, they sleep on; and though he be absent, yet they know it not, as Samson knew not that God had lest him, till he went out to shake himself: but, when God's departure becometh sensible, it will make a wicked Saul to howl, and will make a gracious tender soul to take the alarm hot; as we see, Cant. iii. 5, where the bride, missing Christ, is put to seeking; and, still missing him, her heart is kept sluttering and on wing in pursuing after his presence, till she recover and find it.

As the use of the point, we would exhort you to let this truth fink in your hearts: there is a necessity of the conviction of these two, 1. Of the wrongs done to Ged. 2. Of God's absence, ere ye can be serious in the exercise of repentance and turning to God. What is the cause that many lie still in deep security with much debt upon their score, and lie down and rise up without God's company? Even this, that they never had it, and were never troubled for the want of it; they were never convinced and made sensible of their Now, this conviction is not, fimply to know that we have fin, as many take it to be, who think it enough that they know that they are finners; but it is fuch a conviction, as arrests the sinner before God, and puts him to answer for his fin. It is like an officer coming with an order to put a man in prison for debt; he may go confidently and stoutly enough up and down the fireet, under the knowledge of his debt; but, when he is arrested for it by the officer, it affects him, and toucheth him in the quick: fo is it with a foul thoroughly convinced of fin; men may know that they are finners, but the conscience for a time may not much trouble them, and they may take on more to a long day, and shift challenges and convictions; but, when the conscience awaketh, and the law arresteth them, the matter finks deeper on them. Would you then know what is a fuitable frame for fasting and communicating? We would commend this to you, even to study a thoroughness of the convic-

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tion of fin, and to be fenfible of the distance that is betwixt God and you, and narrowly to observe whether he be present or absent. It is very fad and much to be lamented, that many, who are ignorant of the way of God, are so strongly persuaded of the good. nels of their condition, that there is no access for any word fo much as once to bear upon them: if we fhould afk many of you, Whether are ye thoroughly convinced of your wrongs done to God, and fenfible of the distance betwixt him and you? Ye would readily answer, That ye never wanted nor missed him; he hath been always your God, and ye have been always his people: not from any strength of faith, but from ignorance, stupidity, and carnal presumption. Yes, many of you have not so much knowledge as to cover your ignorance and hypocrify; neither can any gain the least ground of you, to make you sensible that your faith and communion with God are unfound and delufory, because they have not had a right rife from the conviction of fin, and of distance from God, putting you on to repentance, and covenanting with him. But, because several persons will be ready to think and fay, that they have convictions of fin, as indeed there is much ground and reason for them; I shall point out some convictions, for which there is just ground, and whereby ye may know if your convictions have been thorough and found; most whereof, if not all of them, may be gathered from the words. 1. There is a conviction of the want of faith: the Holy Spirit's first work, John avi. 9. is to " convince the world of fin, because they believe not on him." Were ye ever convinced of your unbelief? Many will be convinced of fabbath-breaking, of curfing, fwearing, lying, drunkenness, &c. to be fins, who were never convinced of the fin of their want of faith; for they always had it, as they think. And what, I pray, can fuch as ye do at a fast or humiliation for sin, when this is your great fin, and ye cannot by any means be brought to take with it, though you take with other

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fins; but can come boldly to the table of the Lord as believers, and fuch as have no just reason to doubt of the foundacis of your faith; while, in the mean time, all the faith that ye have is but rotten prefumption? This is a most fearful condition: for, so long as ye think that ye have faith, ye cannot think yourselves to be loft; neither can ye cast yourselves down with a stopped mouth before God, nor is there access for any word from him to do you good. A fecond conviction or challenge is of, or for the want of a new nature. Were ye ever convinced of this? not only of this and that, and the other particular fin, but that ye were in a finful and unrenewed state? Nicodemus, John iii. comes to Christ, and speaks him fair; but the Lord lets him know that fair words, a great profession, and some, yea, much knowledge, will not do the turn; he must necessarily have somewhat else, even a new nature; he must " be born again, else he cannot enter into the hingdom of heaven." He is very unwilling and loath to digest that doctrine; but the Lord tells him, that " That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." It were good that many of you had that word from your heart in your mouth, which is, Jer. xxxi. 18. " Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." Convictions of a natural state, alas! are very rare; if any of you have had fuch convictions, try what became of them, and what followed on them. A third conviction or challenge is of, or for former breaches of covenant, for gospel fins, and the fin of dealing unfaithfully in God's covenant; and can any of you shift this challenge, confidering what ye were tied to in baptism, and by other vows and engagements which ye have come under fince that time, especially at the Lord's supper? how few of those have been kept? or rather, have they not been as fo many ropes of fand? And who are fuitably challenged for, and convinced of fuch breaches, as it is implied here, that these people are? A fourth conviction is, of the want of God's

which imports an absence of God, and that finfully procured by them, for which they weep and are kindly affected. The absence of God, simply considered. is no ground of challenge, it being an act of fove. reignty; but absence, procured through our sin, is a great ground of challenge. Alas I the most part know not, neither are acquainted with any fuch challenge: they think God is always with them, however the Lord is absent : and it would well become us to search out diligently that which hath procured bis absence; for, whatever may be God's end in it, there is abundant ground of just challenge that we may get against ourselves in it. A fifth ground of challenge is, in respect of their own flupidity and ignorance, which have incapacitated them to take up the way how to come to God for making up the breach; therefore they "alk the way to Zio." And this may be another fad challenge is many, who, through their ignorance, fenfeleffnels, and flupidity, have utterly indisposed and unfitted themselves to make their peace with God, and are without knowledge of the way how to vent their defires to him. A fixth challenge implied is, the want of love to one another; and a challenge for feen diftance betwixt God and them, belps to bear in on them this challenge for distance betwixt one another: therefore, now they fay, " Come, and let us join ourselves." This is another challenge, which we should not shift; it is too evident, whatever our professions be, that we are much cooled and fallen behind in our love to one another. A feventh challenge is, lying long under a feen, evil condition, without being fultably affected with it; therefore these people go now with the more tenderness about the work of turning to God, and of their renewing covenant with him, that they were fo long a falling to it : I suppose, many of you, who never knew what repentance was, and others also who have been more ferious than now they are, may have this challenge. It is no strange nor uncouth thing that is called for from us, to fit and

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prepare us for falls and communions; it is even feriousness in these most plain, common, and obvious things; and, if ye can hold up your faces, and say, that these concern you not, nor the present occasion, ye may wave and lay them aside; but, if they be such things as your consciences convince you of, it is most necessary that ye take time to think upon them and lay them to heart, and that ye study through grace to be humbled for them before the Lord.

But the observation that we intend mainly to speak a word to at this time, is this, " That there is no amending or righting of an ill condition, but by making fure and fast the covenant betwixt God and us." What is the remedy of this people's ill condition here, when they find themselves so far wrong? "Come, (fay they) and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." When I speak here of covenanting, as that on which the quieting of our consciences, and the remedy of things wrong in our condition, doth fo much depend; it is not to be understood of a bare promise only to right and amend things that are wrong and amiss, but it is to be understood of a real covenanting with God, of a real and cordial accepting of the offer of Jesus Christ made to us in the gospel, whereby an union betwixt God and us through him as Mediator is made up; wherein there is God's offer and promise, on the one fide; and our faith, accepting of, and fubmitting to the terms and conditions on which the offer is made, on the other fide: whereupon there followeth a mutual closed bargain betwixt. God and us; or the very bargain is thus made up : and fo, whatever way we look upon and confider our condition as evil or fad, whether in respect of challenges for, and convictions of fin, and of wrongs done to God; or in respect of darknels, unclearnels, and confusion; or in respect of crosses and afflictions; this is the way to win at the remedy thereof. Thus David, 2 Sam, xxiii. 5, when he is drawing near to death, and hath many challenges

for things that had been wrong in his personal walk and in his house, which had brought on it much affliction and trouble; and when he finds himself very infirm, and under the want of much of that lively fense he had went to have, he betakes himself to this, "Though (fays he) my house be not so with God, vet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant. ordered in all things and fure; and this is all my falvation, and all my defire, though he make it not to grow." And if we look on the prodigal, Luke xv. when he is under a conviction of his fin and mifery. what refolves he upon as a remedy? " I will go (faith he) to my father, and I will fay, Father, I have finned, &c. The first thing he betakes himself to, and refolves upon, is, to catch hold of the covenant relation betwixt his father and him. And there is a ne. ceffity of this, on a threefold account: 1. Because there can be no folid ground for extricating and bringing one out of an evil condition, but by covenanting with God; for what elfe, I pray, can filence a challenge, or quiet and calm the conscience in respect of guilt. when it faith to the person, Thou hast sinned, and art liable to the curse? There is no way to get fin and the curse removed, but by fleeing to Jesus Christ, and clofing with God's offer of pardon, upon the account of his fatisfaction refted on by faith: therefore is faith compared to a " fhield, whereby we may quench the fiery darts of the devil." It is true, faith the foul, ac. cufed of enmity against, and wrongs done to God, I was an enemy to him, and greatly wronged him; I was liable to his curse and wrath for fin, but he offered me pardon and reconciliation through the Mediator, and I have accepted of his offer, and do rest upon Christ's satisfaction for pardon; therefore I an justified, and shall not come into condemnation. 2. Because there can be no peace to the foul, till there be fome thorough evidence that the covenant is fixed and made fure; for this is the way that God hath laid down for making peace; as the quarrel and curse are

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founded on the breach of one covenant, fo our peace ariseth upon our engaging with God in another covenant; hence are all those promises, Jer. xxx. 31,-33. and Heb. viii. which are so often repeated, "I will pardon their iniquities, I will remember their fins no more," &c. all which promifes, being privileges of a covenanter with God, whoever would look for the performances of the promises, there is a necessity of their being in covenant with him, ere they can expect the performance of them, and attain to peace. 3. Because all that are without the covenant of grace are under the curse, being liable to the breach of the first coverant: therefore, Eph. ii. thefe two are put together, " Strangers from the covenant of promise; and having no hope, being without God and Christ in the world:" And fo, to be without the covenant, is to be without hope, and without God, and without Chrift.

Use 1. Lay this for an unquestionable ground, that, if ever ye be well, it must be by this covenant with God. Is there any conviction of fin, of violating bygone engagements to God, and of wrongs done to him? Take it for a certain truth, that things must be thus adjusted, and thus secured betwixt God and you; that ye must have pardon and peace, by entering into. and making fure the new covenant with God on the grounds of his own grace: that is, when God is treating with you, and declaring that he is content to close with you, on condition that ye will take with your fin, renounce your own righteoulness, and fubmit to Christ's, and be content to live to him all the days of your life that are behind; step to, and close with him, on his own terms: for the heart's yielding its confent to God, is the making of the covenant; and that en-In fum, it titleth to all the good that is in the Bible. is this, If ye (faith the Lord) accept of my offering myfelf to be your God, and confent to give up your, felves to me, if ye will quit your own righteoufness, and embrace Christ's, I will pardon your sin, I will be

forthcoming to you for happiness, and will fanctify you, and make you fit to be partakers of it: and the making of the covenant fure, is your yielding to be happy on these terms, even to be content to take justification and pardon of fin freely, by virtue of Christ's fatisfaction; and to give up yourselves to be his, to be for him, and to live to him, and not to yourselves. As ye get God engaged to be yours, so ye engage and subscribe to be God's, and to walk fuitably, according to your engagement, in his strength; to " be for him, and for no other," as the word is, Hof. iii. or as it is, Ifa. xliv. c. " One shall fay, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and firname himself by the name of Israel." He shall, as it were, write down his name, "I am God's." This, in thort, is covenanting with God; which may be done in hearing the word, in praying, in meditating, and in communicating; when faith is distinctly, at least, really and truly, exercised on God's offer and promife, and when, upon deliberation, there is a fincere refolving with the person's self, I will take God as he offers himself to me, and will give up and away myfelf to him; and when, according to this refolution, there is actually a yielding to God.

Use 2. Seeing this is the only way to right and unravel an evil and revelled condition, let me exhort you to pitch on this as your great work, and to aim at it as your great scope, these days that are before you, that a good understanding may be begotten betwixt God and you, and all quarrels removed and taken away, by declaring and acknowledging your iniquities before him, and by covenanting with him on his own terms: this would make much kindly heart-melting, and would make the communion to be cheering and refreshful, when, after a secretly closed bargain with God, we should come to receive his seal, and to append and put to ours: and whatever tossings and difficulties there may be to get ourselves made right

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here; yet we should seriously endeavour to get our hearts brought up, sincerely to say with the Psalmist, Psal. xvi. "My soul hath said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord:" and to win at a settled deliberate yielding to God, so as there may be quietness in it for the time to come.

Use 3. There is here sad ground of expostulation with, and reproof to many. I know not what many of you are doing; most part, I suppose, are taken up about the outward ordinances; but as to the main thing of making up covenant with God, as it is holden forth in the gospel, I fear that is much neglected and milkenned: yet let me fav it, though ye should pray and weep all these days, without this it is impos, fible that ye can have peace, or win to have a good understanding betwixt God and you. Put yourselves therefore to the trial, and fee if the frame of your spirits be fuch as holds any tolerable proportion to the frame and posture that Ifrael and Judah are represented to be in here: they are going, we are fitting still; they are weeping, our eyes are dry, and our hearts hard: the humble mournful way of religion, alas! is much gone from amongst us. Again, they are renewing the covenant; but, ah! what can we fay as to the lecuring of things betwixt God and us? Are not the most part as well satisfied with their state and condition, as if there were nothing wrong nor amiss in it? Alas! shall be slubber and scurf over religion, and vail ourselves from ourselves and from others, when in the mean time our hearts and consciences might, if awake, tell us that we are not in covenant with God? I know many of you will be ready to fay, ye are friends with God; but let me ask such, Did ye ever know and believe the enmity? did ye ever apprehend yourselves to be strangers to God, and without the covenant? did ye ever experimentally know any good that his word did to you, as to the bringing of you under the bond of the covenant? hath any gracious change followed upon it? The truth is, many of you

think that ye may go to beaven without the word, and the faving effects of it on your hearts: ye found them (as ye fancy) always inclined to love God; ye suppose that ye were always in friendship with him; which, though there were nothing else to prove it, is a manifest evidence that ye were never really in friendthip with him. But let me ask you further, Did ye ever know what it was, to make use of Christ's mediation, in the making up of a covenant betwixt God and you? It is like, ye will fay, ye prayed; but ye might have done that, though Christ had never come into the world, and though there had been no ground for your acceptance on his account. But I say again, What use made ye of his mediation and sufferings? I fear ye know little or nothing at all of this; but ye come to him, because ye imagine that he bears a good will to all finners, and is very eafy to be dealt with, and that God the Father is more inexorable, and a harder party to deal with than he; as if Jefus Chrift the Son were not as just as the Father; or, as if God the Father were not as ready, through a Mediator, to accept of finners, as the Son is. I would ask you further. Do ye think, or can ye with any just reason think, that your covenant is fure, when ye know neither what it is, nor how ye have entered into it? In the covenant, as there is an offer on God's side, so there must be a receiving on ours: though I grant that fometimes this, to ferious fouls, will be unclear, and it will be their burden that they have not strong enough defires to have it thorough and clear; fuch poor fouls should put their darkness, unbelief, and undexterous. ness in Christ's hand to be helped. But it is a sad matter, that, when we should be praying you to close with Christ in the covenant, it must be our work, and the hardest piece of it, to shake many of you out of your prefumption: It is no pleasure to us, God knoweth, to preach you out of the covenant; but your prefumption layeth a necessity on us, to lance you to the quick, and to fearch down to the bottom of your

fores; because these must be discovered and laid open, before there can be any just ground for the application of consolation: if once we could get you brought under a thorough conviction that ye have been deluding yourselves, we might yet have sweet, lively, comfortable, and refreshful days: if ye were in this posture, "Going and weeping, for perverting your ways, with your faces toward Zion," towards God through the Mediator, ye might expect God's blessing on these solution ordinances, and that there should be a covenant made up with him, "never to be forgotten." O! be serious in the business, and let not this opportunity go by you unimproved to the best and utmost advantage; and himself graciously help you hereunto.

SERMON IX.

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Right covenanting with God, a business of the great-

On Jan. 1. 4, 5.

In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the
Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with
their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join
ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall
not be forgotten.

COVENANTING with God, if it be real, wellgrounded, and fure, is a bufiness of incomparably great concern and advantage to sinners; but when it is otherwise, and only imagined without any solid

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ground, it is attended with the greatest disappointment and prejudice imaginable: a man in that case fancieth himself to be in a state of friendship and savour with God, while, in the mean time, he is an enemy to God, and God an enemy to him; and is there any disappointment or disadvantage in the world comparable to that? It is one great end and design of all ordinances, that strangers to God by nature, may be engaged to him, and made to become his covenanted people; it was for this end that Christ came into the world, and laid down his life, and shed his precious blood, even to bring sinners into a covenant of reconciliation and friendship with God: and therefore the ordinance, that is now approaching, is called "the new covenant, or new testament in his blood."

The words have in them a short and sweet sum and compend of the gracious frame of a people, turning home to God, to get a broken covenant made up: I frael and Judah having deeply declined from the blessed state and condition wherein God had once graciously put them, their return and repentance is here both prophessed of, and promised; and this is the great thing which they design in their returning, even to get the knot (to say so) of the covenant betwixt God and them made sast and sure, so as they may never any more be separated from him.

We shall at this time shortly name some general observations from the words; the first whereof is this, "That there is nothing that a people, who have any convictions of their sin and of their distance from God, should more singly aim at, and seriously seek after, than to be sirmly joined to the Lord in covenant, or to be in good terms with him according to his covenant:" For these come to the same amount, to be in good terms with God, to be reconciled to God, and to be in covenant God; by the one we come to the other. This, we say, should be aimed at, and sought after by all that are naturally born enemies to God, "aliens and strangers to the covenant of pro-

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mise, without hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. compared with ver. 1, 2, 3. where, to be "dead in fins and trespasses," is expounded to be "without the covenant." But more especially, those who are touched with the sense of their sin, should have this for their aim, design, and endeavour; as we see in these spoken of here, who, when they come to any sense of their sin, this is clearly their great design and work, very seriously and closely pursued by them.

To clear and confirm it, take thefe three words. Consider, 1. What state and condition man naturally is in: 2. What God is to man in reference to that estate: And, 3. What covenanting with God is: and we will find that there is nothing which he should more feriously defign and seek after. 1. Man is naturally an enemy to God, and, in respect of his malicious desperate inclination, given to thwart with God, whereby God stands as an enemy to him: he is liable to the curse of God, and God is as an armed man against him, as Job speaks; and he, like an unarmed child, running on the boffes of his buckler. 2. Confider, that God is not only an enemy, but stands stated as such with his curse against finners, according to that word, "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law, to do them:" and this curle is like the flaming fword in the hand of the cherubims, which with terror separates betwirt God and the finner, so that there is no access for him to God; and, if he have any thoughts of God, he is troubled with them; and all the creatures are armed against him, so that he can expect nothing but enmity from every stone of the field. 2. Consider, that covenanting with God is that whereby a man, who is naturally at enmity with God, cometh to be in friendship with him, and hath the face of every thing altered: the meditaof God is fweet to him; the creatures are in league with him; the angels become ministring spirits to him; all God's dispensations become lovely, and do work together for his good, even those that are in

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themselves most terrible; death and the grave become servants to him; and, being in covenant with God, he can triumph over them, and all troubles and perfecutions, and say that he is "more than conqueror in them all," as it is, Rom. viii. And saith the apostle to such, I Cor. iii. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's." Is it any wonder then, that a poor soul, touched with the sense of sin, be desirous and solicitous to be in covenant with God? And therefore, whether we look upon it as a duty, or as an evidence of a person truly humbled for sin, it is very desirable, and should be seriously sought after.

The use serves to show, That the great scope which ve should now have before you, is to have a broken covenant made up with God; it should be your main defign to put this grand business to a point, that there may be no war, but a standing league betwixt God and : and therefore, whoever they be that fatisfy themfelves with going about the ordinances, and mifken this, they certainly mistake the mark. The great matter is not to come to the communion, neither is it to win at somewhat of heart-softness, or to a little sense, which are good; but it is really to be in covenant with God, to be able to fay on good ground, "The Lord is my God: my Beloved is mine, and I am his." And when he faith, "Return, backfliding children," to be in case to answer with the heart, " Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." This is indeed a defirable thing; and he is an unhappy man that doth not, that will not heartily defire and

Secondly, From their very great feriousness in going and weeping, in going to seek the Lord, asking the way to Zion, and from their encouraging one another to join in covenant with the Lord, observe, "That where there is any sincerity, or begun work of grace, it shows itself in nothing sooner than in an impulse to

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ness therein." For, only to be in covenant, and not to have the knowledge of it, cannot give that peace and comfort which a prefent fad exercise calleth for; therefore, fay they, while they are going and weeping, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten." So then, we fay, that a fincere and gracious work of God appears in nothing fooner, than in this impulse to have the covenant of God fixed and put out of doubt; to have this at a point, is their great defign here, and they are very ferious in it. So, Ifa. xliv, where ver. 3. there is a promise of the work of the Spirit in sanctifying; and how is this work of the Spirit proved? or wherein doth it appear? From thus, ver. v. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and firname himself by the name of Ifrael." The work of God's Spirit, when he comes to fanctify and fave, is fuch as makes a man run and devote himself to God, with hand, heart, and mouth. Ye never faw people more quickly, and with better will, come to the church at the most solemn occasion. than (when this work is begun, or there is any kindly exercise about it) serious fouls will be ready to run with their heart to subscribe to God's covenant, when the terms of it are laid out before them. Only advert to these two things in this observation. (1.) When I speak of entering into covenant with God, I mean of the heart's closing with him by faith, according as he offers himself in the gospel; when he saith, Quit and renounce your own righteoufness, and take mine; quit and abandon your lufts and idols, and give yourselves to me, and I will be your God, and be forthcoming to you in all things that concern your happiness here and hereafter; the heart yields, and fays, Content, Lord, the offer is good, and I accept of it: and as wives were wont (as it is yet the custom) to firname themselves by the husband, so doth the soul, upon the

matter, in this covenant, subscribe, "I am God's," This is called a "vielding to God," or the "giving of the hand to him." 2 Chron. xxx. 8. and Rom. x. 1. it is called a submitting to the righteousness of God." (2.) When we speak of this impulse towards, or defire of covenanting with God, it is not to be understood of every raw wish, such as Balaam had, to be in heaven; but it is a feriously urging impulse, an earnest hunger and thirst, and an ardent longing to have this at a point: it is fuch a thirsting defire, as all the world beside will not be able to quench: it makes the soul eager in the pursuit of the thing, even to meet and close with God, in the covenant: it is, in effect, that which, Mat. v. 6. is called a "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," because hath in it a sixed longing with holy pain, which, Cant. v. 8. is called a being "fick of love." It is fuch a defire, as makes the heart even faint and fick for the want of the thing defired, which can be fatisfied with nothing elfe; no more than a hungry man can be fatisfied, if handfuls of gold were offered to him; it is meat he must have. In this respect (which will be the reason of the doctrine) Christ Jesus is called the food of the foul, and the covenant is like the pap, whereby Christ's fulness is communicated and conveyed to us; for we have no access to Christ but by the covenant: therefore, Eph. ii. 12. these two are put together, being "without Christ," and being " without the covenant;" and Isa. lxvi. 11, 12. converts are faid to " fuck and be fatiffied with the breafts of the church's confolation," and to be "dandled on her knees." Believers are like new born babes, whom nothing can fatisfy, or do good to, but the breafts; and the ordinances are, as it were, the breafts at which they fuck, and which are as fo many pipes to convey to them fpiritual nourishment: to which the apostle alludeth, I Pet. ii. 2. when he faith, "As new born babes, defire the fincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." And then follows,

"To whom coming as unto a living stone," &c. Jesus Christ is the milk, and the word the pap that conveys him: and as the first thing that evidenceth life to be in a new born babe, is hunger after the breast; so it is here, the covenant satisfies the new born new creature.

The use of the point serves to put you to look. back, and to confider, whether ever ye have in your experience known this, wherein spiritual life shews itfelf, even to be holily fond (or browden, so to speak) of the pap: the regenerate foul cannot endure to be kept back from fucking the breafts of these consolations that are in the covenant. Now, it is very probable that many will catch at this, as a very comfortable mark of regeneration to themselves, and will be ready to fay, Why have we not this defire to be in covenant with God? and, if that will be proof of a work of grace, we want it not: and these Jews here spoken of, before their coming to be in this blessed frame, were ready to boast that they were Abraham's children, and that they had a defire to be in covenant with God; but it will be another fort of defire and eagerness which they will have, when, "the Redeemer comes out of Zion, to turn away iniquity from Jacob." But, that we may know what this defire and impulse that we speak of is, and if indeed ye have it, consider these evidences of it: 1. That it is an ardent and vehement defire, a preffingly urgent impulse; not such as ye have had all your days, but it is an effect of the Spirit's out-pouring, as that parallel place with this, Zech. xii. 10. clears; "I will (faith the Lord) pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace," &c. Away with that grace, with that faith and love, which are as old as yourselves. 2. This defire and impulse hath fuch a vehemency with it, as puts the man to his feet, to go and pray, and to go weeping: it stirreth him then so, as he must needs go, though he be much in the dark, and knows not fo well and diffinctly whether he is going; because love to be in covenant with

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God, will in a manner make a fool go right to God: though there is reason that he should seek after help to his infirmity. The defires of many are like the fluggard's defire, who lieth still on his bed, and his ease flavs him: this defire maketh fome holy ftir, and roufeth to diligence in the use of means. 3. This defire is fuch, as never dies out, till the person be thorough in the point of covenanting with God; and therefore. though he should be put, as it were, to dig wells in the wilderness, and to go from strength to strength, yet he will adventure on it, and hold on in his way; the apostle, Philip. iii. speaks of it as his "one thing;" and, when persons are suitably serious in this, it is their one thing, and not a piece of work only on the by; if they may come to it in all their lifetime, they think (as they had reason to do) that they make a good bargain, and have gained a noble prize. Never did a man on horse-back, in a race, spur faster than they do, that by any means they may attain it. 4. The principle of defire after covenanting with God, holds them constantly in an estimation of, and sucking at it, as the means of their life; as the babe cannot live without the breaft, fo they cannot live without the covenant, they cannot rest but in it. I speak not now what believers are in their declinings; but, when they are in a right frame, they have no being but in this covenant; they must needs have milk flowing through the breafts of it for their nourishment. That is a curfed life, or rather death, of persons, who come to the word, and care not whether it be made lively or not; and come to the communion, and care not whether they get by it any life and comfort or not: and a curfed faith, that keeps fouls from making use of Christ; and such is the faith of many hearers of the gospel. Now, covenanting is the believer's earnest, and they are hereby made to forget their father's house; in hope to be admitted to dwell with Christ for evermore.

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Thirdly, Observe, "That a well qualified defire of covenanting with God is a good token of conversion; or, a rightly bleffed defire of being in covenant with God, is the language of persons coming home to God." "Come, (fay they) and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant." The Lord fets down this as their commendation, and as an evidence of his begun gracious work in them: they, no doubt, had words of covenanting before, but wanted this right impulse and defire, and therefore sat still: but now they are much affected, stirred, and put to their feet; it being an effect of the poured-out Spirit on them. We fay, this is a good token of a begun work of grace, and of persons coming home to God; because this impulse towards, and defire of covenanting with God, speaks out these three. (1.) The sense of their need of him, and that they cannot live without him; and the stopping of their mouth with holy shame and confusion before God. (2.) An high estimation that they have of him, a judging that they have no happiness but in him. (3.) It speaks out faith, in their actual betaking of themselves to him for the upmaking of what they want and stand in need of. There is somewhat of all these in the prodigal, who, when he came to himself, reckons thus with himself, 1. "I perish for hunger:" this points at the fense of his need. 2. "There is bread enough in my father's house, and to spare:" which shews his believing efleem of the fulness of God for a supply of his need, and for making him, a poor miferable perishing wretch, completely happy. 3. His resolution is, "I will go and fay, Father," &c. this holds out his actual purpose of covenanting with God, which bath always faith in it. It is the fame on the matter with this, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual

The use of it serveth to shew what a serious or well-qualified desire after covenanting with God is, and wherein it consists: and those things that are

marks of it, may also serve for directions how to go about it aright. Ift, This well-qualified or ferious defire of covenanting with God, floweth from a two fold conviction: 1. From a conviction of people's fin and breach of covenant formerly, and of their diftance from God: whereof we spake somewhat the last day. We are afraid that many of you think you defire. when yet ye never knew aright your guilt in breaking covenant, nor took up aright the diffance betwixt God and you: it is one fort of a defire that a whole man hath to speak with the physician, and another that a fick man hath: it is of the latter that we mean here. 2. From a conviction of the want of God's company: these here know now, though they be Abraham's feed, that yet they are nevertheless naturally enemies to God and Christ, and without both; and therefore they feek him, and to make a covenant with him. There are some that pretend to be feeking God and Chrift, and yet they have him, they think, always in their hearts. But speak soberly; did ye ever want or miss him? It may be, at the one word ye will fav, We hope not; and at the next word, perhaps, Too often. And it is still but a guesting at the best. When the prodigal came to himself, he saw that he had been (to fpeak fo) in the wrong close. 2dly, This wellqualified defire, hath a kindly heart foftness with it, which is a good, though a very rare thing: they go here weeping; and when they are faying these words, "Come, and let us join to the Lord in covenant," their tears are trickling down. It is a good and hopeful defire, which is expressed with the tear in the ever proceeding from a fuitably affected heart. There are, alas! many of our defires that do not kindly affect, neither do they make any change; the heart remaineth dead, stiff, and hard under them. 3dly, This well-qualified defire puts on to diligence, and is not like the fluggard's defire: therefore " they go and feek the Lord;" they are eager and earnest in the matter, and are taken up with it. This defire will make the

man fometimes "forget to eat his bread," and it may

be to "pray feven times a day;" (what if I had faid

twice feven times?) and very oft to withdraw from all

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company, at least, that is not edifying and profitable, and to retire to the fields, or to the chamber, quietly to lay as it were, a chase by the pursuit of faith, to the finding out of God's company: it will make him and her go to the poorest body in all the town or village, that is gracious, to "alk the way to Zion;" this is also a-very rare thing. Ye all know the way to heaven, as ye think, and this makes you foolishly confident, till ye run yourselves into the mire and into the pit at last, if grace, by making a saving change, prevent not. 4thly, This well-qualified defire is a humbling defire: there is no pleading here with God, of the privileges of the relation they have to Abraham, and to the covenant made with him; they cannot find in their hearts, nor have they confidence, to do that. They judge themselves to be very unlike him, and they carry humbly towards one another, glad to alk the way at, and to get fome knowledge of it from one another, how they may win forward; they are like the spouse, who saith to the daughters of Jerusalem, Cant. v. " If ye fee my beloved, tell him that I am fick of love:" Take my commendations (as if the had faid) to him, and lay out my cafe before him. Such ferious and humble fouls will be glad to take help in the way from any body that can give it; which faith, that they are diligent and painful. 5thly, This defire, as it may, is always fetting forward; "they are going and asking the way:" and though they have a strong tide, as it were, against them, yet the wind of their own defire and impulse steereth them through, and maketh them stem the port; and though they make but flow progress, yet it is always towards Zion. 6thly, This defire is a peremptory, and (to fay so) an unlimited desire, and that in a twofold respect: 7. In respect of coming at God: it must have him, and will not fubmit to the want of him; communion

with God it must have. 2. In this respect, that it maketh no condition with God of its own, but is heartily well content to take him on his own terms: this indeed is a notably good mark of a-well-qualified defire, when a foul defires not fo much to be at hea. ven, as to be at God; and when it is (as I just now faid) content to take him on his own terms. Many will defire God and heaven, but with some such fecret refervation as this, that they get leave to bruik their lufts and idols, that they may have liberty to tipple and trifle away their time, to take their fill of the world, to be in credit and reputation, and to purfue after some one thing or other in the world: or at least they must be allowed to go about the establishing of their own righteousness: but this desire is waited with the abandoning of all idels, without any allowed exception or refervation, and with the renouncing of felf-righteousness also in the point of justification; and therefore it is called, " fubmitting to the righteoufnels of God:" It favs not a word against the terms of the covenant, but holds all. These things were good to be feriously thought on, and fought after, in our approaching to the table of the Lord, to renew our covenant with him; and, where they are not in some measure, our desires will not be found to be of the right kind. It were therefore very fuitable for you, to think, how ye may get your hearts quickened and warmed with vehement and unquenchable defires after this covenanting with God, and after the water of life. O! know ye any thing of this? There are some who have found it in experience, and who can reprefent it better to themselves than we can express it : ye who have had " your hearts panting for God, for the living God," as David faith his heart did, Pfal. xlii. can tell what raw wishes were before, and that the grace of God works fuch defires as have another fort of edge on them, and have a holy disquieting and reftless hunger for the breafts of God's covenant, and along : a id so tony

cannot rest nor be satisfied, yea, nor live without them.

Fourthly, Observe, "That a people or person may have some sincere desires after covenanting with God, and yet have much weakness, many infirmities and fears, in the accomplishing of that their delign." Many poor puzzled and perplexed fouls may have this honest defire, and 'yet not know well how to put the thing in practice; even like unto these mentioned here, who are going toward Zion to join themselves to the Lord in covenant, and yet are asking the way. They have covenant of with God in their eve as the great scope, but are ignorant in a considerable meafure of the way; yet they fit not still till they get the way, as it were, described on a card to them, but they rife and make forward as they may. I nothing doubt, the truth of this doctrine is known in experience by fome ferious, though much toffed and puzzled fouls, who have some honest and earnest longings after him, and after covenanting with him; who yet know not well how to win at him, or how to make this covenanting practicable: thus the honest well-meaning daughters of Jerusalem ask the spoule, Cant. vi. "Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may feek him with thee?" There was a fincere defire after him, and a fixed purpose to be at him, and to decline no labour nor pains in order to coming by him; yet they know not well whither to go for finding of him: even like honest Mary, who, John xxi. would fain have Christ, and comes to the grave to feek him, and, miffing him, weeps; and when the angel speaks to her to comfort her, that will not do it: the continues still weeping, and tells the cause; "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." It was an evidence of the bonesty of her desire, that though she knew not where he was, yet fhe could not be diverted by any thing from a mournful, reftless, and different pursuit after his presence. This may proceed partly, in the first place, From believers' infirmity, and their

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not being thorough in the knowledge of gospel mys. teries; from their ignorance of the parties, and conditions of the covenant, of the nature, properties, and promifes of it. If they knew how kind and conde. scending the Lord is, how near he brings his word, how little he will take off their hand, how folid the covenant is, how fure the Cautioner is, and how their part of the covenant is undertaken for, as well as God's, they would not have fuch doubts and fears: hence, Rom. xiv. they who are weak, in knowledge, are faid to be " weak in faith;" because, through their ignorance, they have many doobts. This makes me think, that, if many of you had fincerity and ferious. ness in the great concern of your falvation, ye would be much, and almost inextricably puzzled how to rid yourselves in many things ve would meet with in your condition: because of the abounding of your ignorance, ye cannot, alas! tell what repentance is, what closing with Christ in the covenant is, what Christ's offices are, and what use should be made of theme and therefore, if ye were put into any firait or dump, through the fense of fin, it needed be no great wonder that ve should be in much confusion, and did not know what to do to get out of it. It were good, therefore, that ye studied the knowledge of God, and of the covenant; that, if ever God do you good, ye may have some clearness and distinctness in the way of the remedy of your evils, and of the extricating you our of your difficulties. But that which keeps many quiet, is, alas! their own prefumption grown to a great height, and the devil's rocking them fast asleep in the cradle of fecurity: it is a wonder to fee fo many very confident of peace with God, who yet know not how it is come at; when God touches your conscience, ye will be put to cry, "What shall we do?" because of your ignorance. 2dly, It proceeds partly from want of experience; hence, though fome, it may be, have light and knowledge, yet, wanting experience of the thing, they are at a stand, and know not what to do in this or that case: just as if a man were to go to

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London, and were informed of all the towns and poffs in the way; yet when he comes to advance in his journey, not having gone the way before, he is often in doubt whether he be right: so it is with many, who from literal knowledge can tell what faith and repen. tance is; but when their spirits are jumbled, (to speak lo) confused, and put through-other, the matter looks far otherwise upon them; and they are like a man, who coming to a shallow and safe ford of a river that is mudded, yet fears to take it, because he hath not ridden it before; whereas another, that hath gone through it, can confidently hazard on it. And indeed it is no marvel to fee much of this even amongst believers. A third caufe or ground whence this may proceed, is, prejudice at the way of God, and of perfons at themselves. Men have naturally a fort of gofpel of their own, that they cannot go by, till fome way they be constrained; and, when God puts them to it, they are at a stand: as for instance, there is this premdice in some, that they think none can go and war. rantably take hold of God's covenant, till they be fo and so humbled; that they cannot go with convictions or challenges, till they get fome more deep heartwork, or be in a better and more tender frame: hence Reter faith to Christ, Luke v. very unreasonably, Depart from me, for I am a finful man, O Lord:" whereas David reasoned otherwise, and much more pertinently, Pfal. xxv. when he faith, "Pardon my miquity, for it is great." And hence the question ariseth, " What shall we do?" and, when they are bidden believe, they object, Ah! we are finners, and have evil and hard hearts, and are unhumbled. Look what passed betwixt Peter and his hearers, Acts ii. he layeth out before them their horrid guilt in crucifying Christ; they are pricked in their hearts, and cry, "What shall we do!" He bids them "Repent, and be baptifed:" which takes in faith: and, ver. 41, it is faid, that fuch as were kindly touched, "gladly received the word." Now, I pray, what if they had objected,

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Can we that have even now, or a very little fince. had our wicked hands embrued in the precious blood of Christ, believe on him? Come away, (faith he on the matter) for there is no other way to pardon and peace with God. There was much of this in the primitive times amongst the Christian Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews, many prejudices at, and wrong conceptions of the gospel and covenant of grace, and therefore they would have patched up a gospel of grace and of works: they would have brought in the ceremonies of the law, and established a self-righteousnefs. And this in particular is one great prejudice that the devil k boureth deeply to possess the minds of wakened finners with, even to make them think that it is prelumption for them, though they would fain do it, to come to Christ, and by faith to close with him, unless they be so and so qualified: as long as they are fecure, he makes them take their prefumption for faith: but the next day, when they are awakened, and exhorted to betake themselves to Christ by faith, he calls that also presumption. And indeed, as it is Sa. tan's manner to drive finners on extremes! fo it is our way to run into extremes: that which made us call our prefumption faith, is the same which makes us call our faith prefumption; because we lay it for a ground, that it is our honesty or good disposition, and fo and fo qualified frame, that must commend us to God: and therefore, while we conceive that we have that, it is the ground of our prefumption; and when the conscience is awakened, and we find that we want: that, we cannot believe. A fourth cause or ground whence this, in some, may proceed, who would fain believe, is not so much their darkness and ignorance of the way, as the backwardness, frowardness, and deceit of their heart, that will not, for them, come up to it: fuch are puzzled and perplexed what to do, because they eannot get it well done, and as they would; fuch are like a good archer that can shoot well, but hath a deceitful bow, which, when he hath put his arrow

on the firing, and hath drawn it to the very head, farts afide, and makes him quite mils his mark; the fault and defect is not in the man's skill, but in the how. We the rather make use of this comparison, that the Holy Ghott doth fo in the scripture, resembling our heart to a "deceitful bow, that turns afide:" to that they who are acquainted with their own hearts, know not what to do with them, how to guide them, and bring them up unto, or hold them at any thing that is good; and though, it may be, they could to good purpose give directions to others in such a case; vet they find their own hearts very untractable to admit of them, as if they did not fuit or meet with their own . case. This is indeed a very puzzling difficulty; yet to fuch perplexed fouls there is no new direction to be given, but the renewed exercise of faith, and to put the directions, which they know, in practice; and when one that (to speak so) misgives, to essay another; not to feek, as it were, a new firing, but to cast a new knot on it; and, if two knots should slip, to caff a third, improving more that grace of the covenant to make them hold better. Therefore, Acts ii. when those pricked in their hearts ask, what they shall do, Peter bids them repent: they were begun to do fo, and he bids them be doing and go on. Ye then that are indeed ferious, and to whom your shortcomings are really your fouls burden, would not think it any uncouth, strange, or extraordinary thing, to find defire and affection running far before your light and practice, (though ye would endeavour to have them foot. fide) a Christian's desire may be a day's journey, as it were, before himfelf, as to his attainment: and indeed in some respect it would not be good, if it were otherwife; for it is no good fign of progress in God's way, when the defire of persons go no further length than their practice, or when their practice falls nothing fhort of their defires: both in that case are to be "much suspected; for even eminently holy Paul sees himself to be behind, Philip, iii. when he saith, " I

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think not myself persect; but one thing I do, forget, ting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press towards the r · k." Where he came one post in his attainment, his desire was ten, in a manner, before him. And so is it with those people here spoken of: "Come, (fay they) let us join ourselves to the Lord:" they find themselves to be behind, and endeavour to work themselves up, and to draw themselves and one another forward. We must now draw to a close, and shall therefore but touch the following observations, and pass them in a word.

Fifthly, Observe, "That in people's covenanting with God, their defires and defigns will be much fooner proposed and laid down, than they will be got accomplished and put in execution, or than they will win to fatisfy themselves therein." Although an union be betwixt Christ and them, yet they are not fatisfied, till they be fomewhat clear and distinct about it: they are like the prodigal, who, being in another and strange country, faith first, "I will go," then he ariseth : and, "I will fay to my father," before he actually spake to his father himself, calling him father: some real acting of faith proceeds his more diffinct fatisfying acting of it. There is a faith in refolving to believe, before there be a refling of faith or stayed believing: and yet it is faith that begets that fame resolution. If the prodigal had not had forme faith of "enough in his father's house," and of his father's affection, he would not have refolved to go home; and these people mentioned here would not have fet their faces towards Zion, if they had not had some begun stirrings of faith a source in the latest the

Sixthly, Observe, "That it is a good token to be asking seriously the way to heaven, though the askers be not so clear in it." There is some ground to think that such persons are in the way: and if they hold on, and sollow the directions of the word, they may come thither. It is far better to be dissatisfied, and to ask

the way, than not to ask, and yet to be satisfied with our own knowledge of the way.

Seventhly, Observe, "That persons may fall very far flort of their defire, and have much infirmity, and may meet with many puzzling difficulties how to accomplish what they would be at: yet, when a ferious and longing defire is wakened after covenanting with God, they should go forward, and follow it forth." This people are fhort of what they defired, and yet they go: and they know not, as it were, where to fet down the next foot, till they ask the way, yet they go. on fill asking. There is no disputing here, but forward we should go. I suppose, these here spoken of. might have had several difficulties started, and several obstructions laid in their way, yet on they go: as, ift, this, That they were covenant breakers; yet they, taking feriously with it, stepped over that, and say notwithstanding, "Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant." 2dly, They might have thought, that it was a very long journey, and that they would never be able to go thorough to the end of it: besides that, they were under the dominion of strange kings, who were heathens: fo it may be faid on the matter, and is often faid to ferious fouls, that would fain believe, Can ve believe? It will not be with you; are ye not under the feet of many tyrannous lufts? and how will ye win free from them? Yet they resolve, and must, vea dare not but resolve, to go forward: and the reason is, because they resolve to take with their guilt, and to make use of the covenant for answering and filencing of challenges; and they resolve also, if the journey be long, to make use of the covenant for strength to make them hold on and hold out in it. The weak believer, when fuch doubts are started, should make use of the promises of the covenant, such as there; " Faithful is he who has called you, who also will do it," 1 Theff. v. 24. " Return, backfliding children, and I will heal your backflidings, faith the Lord :" and then follows, " Behold, we come unto thee; for

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thou art the Lord our God," Jer. iii. 22. They yield themselves to the Lord. A third difficulty is their ignorance. They might have faid, We know not the way, and how can we think to come where we defire and defign to be? (as some will be ready to say, We can tell fome words of the catechifm, but, alas we. know not what it is to believe?) Yet they fit not fill for all this, but, as one remedy of their ignorance. they alk the way to Zion with their faces thither. ward." And if ye ask here. How can their faces be thitherward, when they are asking the way? and at whom do they ask the way? The Gentiles amongst whom they live know it not, and they have no other to ask at. I answer, They are hanging on God, and taking their marks and meiths of the way, as he gives them from his word; and there is a most sweet word for fuch, Ifa. xxxv. 8. where the Lord fpeaking of this way, and calling it "the way of holiness," he faith. "The wayfaring man, though a man, shall not err therein." It is the heartformest way that can be; O but it is fafe for the wayfaring finner, for the ferioufly feeking foul, to have the face toward God, for making up of peace with him! Upon the one hand, the Lord hedges up fuch persons way with thorns, that they shall not find their lovers; and, upon the other. he conftrains them to go right forward: " He leads the blind in a way they know not, and makes darkness light before them." Are there not severals of your brought far through this way, and ye know not well how? He brought you to faith very infenfibly, and trained you on piece and piece, and yet ye cannot tell well how; but ve know certainly that it was he that did it; and in this case, O but it be good, fingly to be given up to God's leading and guiding, " who leads his flock like a shepherd, who gathers his lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads them are with young!" as it is, Ifa. xl. 11. The lambs would run wild and ruin themselves, if left on the hills; but they are under the good shepherd's overIX.

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fight and tutory, (to fpeak so) who brings home the loft sheep on his shoulders, and (as it was even now faid) gathers the lambs with his arm, and gently leads them that are with young: which not only faith, that he drives not hard, left they cast the young; but that, as the nurse leads the little child (otherwise than ladies use to be led, by a gentie touch of their hand or arm) by the arm holes, or by the tugs, when the child knows not how to go, and cannot stand on its own feet, even so leadeth he such: "I taught (faith the Lord, Hof. xi.) Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms," When a poor body hath Christ forming in the heart, he will gently lead fuch an one, and deal wonderfully tender with the person. Ye who come honeftly to him, may confidently yield and give up yourselves to be his, and guided by him, though ye be both weak, and know not the way well; if ye can but cast a look to him, (to speak so) or be sweetly filent before him, allowing him to be doing, and to take his own way with you; if you lay yourfelves humbly in the dust, and wait what he will do to you, he will account that believing: "The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the foul that feeks him," faith Jeremiah, Lam. iii. 25. To wait on God's leisure, is a faying much abused, but it is very good and commendable here: " It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the falvation of the Lord." Be not afraid, fincere and exercised souls; I say, be not afraid, when he is, as it were, pouring you from vessel to vessel, and putting you, for his own holy and wife ends, in fome confusion, so that we know not well what to do, or to what hand to turn you; he is wonderous tender of you in that cafe, and will have a special care that ye miscarry not. This is a very weet subject if we could speak suitably of it. Himtelf blefs it to you.

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Malt fiel symmetrick from Art A. iner. Michigan Oliveria <u>traffication (</u>) Grand Standard (1988) (A. Articles (1988))

SERMON X.

Heart-melting is a good frame for covenanting with God.

On'Jer. L.4, 5.

Going and weeping: they shall go, and feek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thisherways, faying, Come, and let us join our felves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

the stance time transfer describe the other between the It is like, that, at the first realing of these words. ye will approve both the design that this people have, of engaging themselves to God in covenant, and their endeavour to have their engagements fo folid and fure, as it may not be broken any more, but may hold for ever: we take it for granted also, that ye will judge, that the disposition and frame of foul wherein they are, while about this great business, is very becoming and fuitable for fuch as have dealt unfaithfully and foully in the covenant of God, and are from the conviction thereof flirred and put upon resolutions to engage with him of new, and to enter again into a covenant with him; we heartily wish that it were a piece of our exercise this night, before our approaching the table of the Lord the next day, to compare the frame and fet of our hearts, with what these words hold forth this people's frame and disposition to be.

We need not now speak to the scope of the words, it being so clear, and having been touched at before. There is here a people prophesied of, who are to be

brought to repentance and covenanting with God in the latter days, whose spiritually good and desirable frame is described; "They shall go weeping and seeking the Lord," each of them shirring up another, having this for their design, and the language of their hearts, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotton."

That which we would now speak a little to, is, Two generals very much becoming a people who design and intend to covenant firmly with God: and seeing it is at this time, in a more special manner, our professed design to close the bargain with him, and, in evidence thereof, are (if the Lord will) to partake of the sign and seal of the covenant, as supposing it to be indeed a closed bargain, or at least that it is feriously desired by us that it may be so; they will not be unsuitable for you to hear and make use of them.

The first general then is this, " That covenanting with God, when people are in earnest in it, will be a very up-taking, exercifing, and weighty bufinefs." This is clear here, if ye confider how these people go about this work; they are in very good earnest: and there are feveral evidences of it; "they are weeping and going; they are feeking the Lord, asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward:" and every one of them stirring up another to renew the covenant, and to cast the knot to firmly, that it may be " a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten:" and fuch as may never loofe or be broken again. Whence the general is clear, viz. That where people mind in earnest the making up of a breach betwixt God and them (which is done by covenanting with him), it will be an exercifing and up-taking bufinefs to them. Ye may confider some scriptures for confirmation of this, which will also hold out what it is; and namely, Mat. xi. 12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force." The Lord is speaking there of men's making peace with God, through himself the Mediator, by which they are

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brought to heaven; and he tells that it is a most ferious business that will abide them brangling (to speak fo) and using of violence: Luke xiii. 2 c. " Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will feek, and shall not be able." It is a narrow gate, and there must be thronging and thrusting to win in at it; men will be put to a fort of agony, as the word fignifics. Confider alfo Paul's words, 1 Cor. ix. 24. " So run as ve may obtain:" infinuating, that there is a fort of running, wherein men are not in carneft, but indifferent whether they get the prize or not; and therefore he would have them making earnest of it, and he proposeth his own practice as an example and copy to them; "I therefore run, not as uncertainly; fo fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myfelf should be a cast-away." These are the expressions of a man who is in good earnest in this business; and his seriousness therein is proposed to you as a pattern, what way ve should run and fight. The like word we have, Phil. iii. 13. " This one thing I do, (it is an uptaking work to me) forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And, ver. 11. "If by any means (faith he) I might attain unto the refurrection of the dead." Every word hath its own weight, to make it-out, that it is so his one thing, that he cares not what it cost him, so be he may obtain gen to be the lied in large combine.

That which we would fay further on this point, shall be a word of application, in these two or three uses: the first whereof serves for instruction. Would ye know what is required of you, as a direction to duty at this time? And would ye know if things be right in your preparation for the communion? This may be a mark to discern, and a direction on the matter; even to be serious, and to make it an uptaking

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business, your one thing, to be about it, as such an occasion and work calls you to be. And if ye shall ask, Wherein consists this feriousness and uptaking exercise in covenanting with God? I shall sum it up to you in these four, which comprehend it. r. The man is taken up in respect of exercise in his conscience; convictions become fresh, challenges are put home, he is pricked less or more at the very heart; there is fomething within him that gives him a conscience-alarm, that puts in his hand a libel, and affires him of an appearance before God's tribunal: and indeed, unless something of this be, men will not be in sarnest; and it is clearly implied in the text; for there are here sharp challenges, that make this people weep, as that extort tears from their eyes. 2. There is a feriousness in respect of the work that it hath on people's hearts and affections: there will be a kindling of defires to have covenanting with God at a point, with a holy fear, left they miscarry in the doing of it; and these put together do much take up the man, and make him feek after thorough acquaintance with his own spirit, which he finds to be so fickle, inconflant, and backfliding; and thus, apprehending the work to be great and difficult, he is put in an holy fear and jealoufy over himfelf, left he mar the matter, and make it worse with himself; as it is said of godly forrow, 2 Cor. vii. 11. "What carefulness, what fear, what indignation, what vehement defire, what zeal, what revenge it wrought in them." Now, when thefe are tumbling (to speak so) through-other in the man, and he hath an inward wrestling, to have the work secured, and is afraid lest it miscarry, is it possible but he will be ferious and much taken up? And this is also implied in the words, "Come, (fay they) and let us join to the Lord in a perpetual covenant:" There is a defire to have the covenant at a point, and they fear it flip, while they are casting the knot; therefore they fay. Let it be "a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." It is good to fear in the very time.

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3. This feriousness is in respect of people's duty it makes them pray, that never prayed before to purpole; it makes then examine themselves, meditate, read, and confer, that never knew before what it was to be taken up with those duties: therefore we find the people going and feeking the Lord, and exciting one another; they are put to their feet, and to reaching forward, fo that they leave nothing undone, whereby they may attains the end. 4. This feriousness appears in the manner of their going about duties: there is another edge than was wont to be on their prayers, felf-judging, and wreftling with God; they are much like to facob, they will not let the Lord go till he blefs them; they will still wrestle, though it should be all the night; they cannot find in their heart to part with him on any terms: and (as the word is, Ifa. lxiv.) they shall " flir up themselves to take hold of him." They are not only going, but weeping; they are not for the fashion in the work; they feek the Lord, and stir up one another to do fo. May we then afk you, Are ye thus in earnest in making for the communion? Nav, (for this is not all) are ye thus in earnest about covenanting with God & which must precede and go before, if things be right. It were good preparation, to have our very hearts moving and fluttering, as it were, within us to be at this.

The fecond use serveth for expostulation with many that pretend a desire and design of covenanting with God, and that they would be at heaven, but yet were never in good earnest to have things at a point betwixt God and them, and to make sure a covenant interest in him. The most part are, alas! taken up with poor, low, and insignificant things, with unnecessary things comparatively. If they be sick, they will be in earnest about the means of their health; if they suffer any loss in their estate, they will be serious to have it made up; if their credit be impaired, they will be much concerned to have it repaired; they are carried forth with a fort of bentness towards those things. But, ah!

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where is there a man or woman, amongst many, with their faces towards Zion in a serious manner, and with a resolute purpose, that peace with God, holiness and heaven they must have? Here is the great stop and stand; and is it possible, think ye, that ye can have peace in your going about duty, while ye are not ferious, nor strive to win in at the strait gate, when ve exercise not yourselves to godliness, when we never (to speak so) cast your coat, nor strip yourselves naked, as it were, (as the word, 1 Tim. iv. 7. fignifies) for that great work; when ye do not run and wrestle, as those who mind to obtain, but are entangled in the things of the world, and languish with laziness in every thing that is spiritually and truly good? How few are there under much exercise about the case of their fouls, afraid left they miss the mark and prize; with jealoufy over themselves, lest they mistake the way to heaven? How few are there, who have it for their one thing, to be firmly joined to the Lord in a perpetual covenant? It is my fear, that, amongst all the great number that are here, there be but very few to be found who are in earnest in this great business; I shall hint at a few forts, that are not in earnest. 1st, Such who are very ferious to be at the external ordinance of the communion, and who will, it may be, take it ill if they be kept back from it, who yet never troubled themselves, nor were seriously taken up with covenanting with God, and with the study of holiness m all manner of conversation, or how to come by the enjoyment of his special and gracious presence; they can be year and day, nay, many years, without it, and never miss it, nor be troubled with the want of it. Alas! it is not feriousness to be at the communion, without this, which will profit you; and even we that are not admitted to the communion, are called to this A fecond fort are such as are indifferent in all religious concerns; they care not for the communion, and would not be very defirous of it, if it were not a shame to them, and some reflection on them, to be

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debarred from it; they think, that whatever in religion goeth beyond their job, is but preciseness, nice. ness, vanity, conceit, and fancy; such never knew what it was to be troubled with doubting or temptations about their fouls state, or the truth and reality of their grace, nor what it was to be under any exercise of conscience on the account of much fin and guilt; nay, they are glad, and can boast themselves that they were never under any luch ferious exercife. A third fort is of fuch who are very civil in their carriage, but they have no more; and, if heaven may be had with ceremonies and fair fashions, they will be in it as soon as any; but they cannot endure to be at pains beyond their ordinary, to take hold of it, to do violence to their own negligence, to take the kingdom of heaven by force, nor in the least to amend their pace, and to be ferious, come of it what may : thefe are a dangerous company; they have communicated many years, and were never debarred, and fo think that all is well with them, and that they may fit still and be at peace. I shall only fay to such, that that was not David's way, nor Paul's way, nor the way of any of the faints, nor the way that Christ commended to his hearers; and, I trow, he will not chalk out another way to you, nor take you to heaven in a way by yourfelves, or in a way of your own: O be not deceived, for God will not be mocked. A fourth fort are those who have been ordering and dispatching their external businesses, fo as they may win to the communion without difstraction by them; but they have taken little or no pains at all to put their hearts in order; little or no time in fecret betwixt God and them, to examine and try, whether matters as to their fouls state and frame be right, clear, and distinct: it is the alone direction that the apostle gives, I Cor. xi. 28. " Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat:" that is a ferious man, who puts himfelf to that comprehensive and uptaking exercise in earnest, who proves himself, if he be in the faith; whose heart smites him that he hath

not taken as much time in fecret, as he hath done in coming to a preaching. It may be, many have come four or five miles to a preparation-fermion, who yet never feriously once looked within themselves to see how matters stood betwixt God and them. O sad,

lamentable, and foul-ruining neglect!

The third use serves for exhortation: and let me exhort, befeech, and obtest you, to study to be in good earnest in this business: believe it, the business of covenanting with God, so as from this time forth ye may have it made fure and clear that ye are God's, and that God is yours, is a thing of great concernment; and infinitely greater, than if kings, and fuch as are called protectors, were fending ambassadors to treat with you about making you great in the world. To press this a little, let me ask you, in the first place, What think ye will become of it, if the covenant be not made ficker betwixt God and you? Ye will most certainly live and lie still, yea even die strangers to God, liable to his curse and wrath ready to be inflicted on you. O lay this to heart, if ye believe that God will call you all to a reckoning, and that he will fay to fuch of you as are not in covenant with him, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Yea, suppose there were not fuch great ground of fear as to that, as indeed there is, can ye promise to yourselves God's hearing any of your prayers, the performance of any promise, or the accepting of any duty off your hand as fervice to him, till ye be in covenant with the Lord? And think ye nothing, or but little of this! adly, Confider the great prejudice that follows on not covenanting with God, and that will attend many in the visible church: "Many (faith the Lord, Luke xiii.) will feek to enter, who shall not be able." The folid faith of this would make many congregations to tremble; for it is not only many profane persons, but many of them that countenance ordinances, yea, many of them that have preached and prayed to the edification of others, and many of them who have heard

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Christ preach in their streets, and who have countenanced faithful ministers, and furthered the work of God, and who have had indignation at others that did not fo, who " will not be able to enter." This word. with that other which we have, Pfal. lxxviii. 34. where there is fuch a feeming ferioufness, and perforating of many graces of the Spirit, and yet nevertheless it is but "a flattering of God with the mouth, and a lying to him with the tongue," (which is a very rife and common thing amongst professors, amongst fuch as profess covenanting with God), should put us in fear. And, adly, Confider this, that we have naturally fuch hearts as others have, that are ready to beguile you, and to backflide and flip out from God; and, are not the beguiles and disappointments of others written for our warning and advertisement? And if any of you should say, We hope there is no such ground of fear as to us, that is but a bewraying of your ignorance and fenfeleffness; for those who are best acquainted with their own hearts, will tell you that it is a ticklish and difficult business to deal truly and thoroughly with God: do ye not know, that many take a counterfeit for grace? And were you not hearing lately, that many hypocrites have personated almost (if there be need to fay almost) every grace? Surely many of you will find it true one day, that " the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and that ye have erred and played the fool egregiously, and in nothing more than in trusting your own hearts: for, faith the wife man, " He that trusts his own heart is a fool." 4thly, Consider, that it now come to a nick and a pinch with you, that either ye must close the covenant with God, or put vourfelves further under his curfe, and eat and drink damnation to yourfelves; because ye have miskenned God's covenant, and flighted covenanting with him, and fo have come as enemies to his table, without making your friendship with him. We declare to you, that ere the morrow at this time, many of you will

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either have a hit or a miss of the greatest bargain and of the greatest concernment that ever was made betwixt parties; and though ye should not eternally incapacitate yourselves for covenanting with God, which many may do, and bring themselves under such a sad fentence, that they shall never henceforth be quickened nor awakened any more; yet ye may make your bands stronger, and may make the business of your covenanting with God far more difficult to yourselves, de antique de la companya dela companya dela companya de la companya dela companya de la company

than now it might be.

The fecond general observation is this, "That a foft, tender, and melting heart is a good and fuitable frame for covenanting with God." Would ye then know what is a fit frame for covenanting with God? It is even this, a heart-melting frame: " They shall go, weeping as they go;" they have much feriousness, inward stir and warmness of heart, and that makes it to melt, and, as it were, flow down before the Lord: this is according to what we have, Zech. xii. 10. "I will (faith the Lord) pour upon the house of David. and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look to him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn, and be in bitterness as one is for his first born:" even when they are coming home, " and asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward," and about to enter in covenant, they are mourning: hence, Ifa. xliv. 3, 4, 5. and elsewhere, even almost where-ever entering into, or renewing of the covenant with God is spoken of, the out-pouring of the Spirit is spoken of also; a "pouring water on him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; bringing rivers out of rocks," &c. for preparing a people for the Lord. And this will be the more clear, if we confider, that foftness and melting of heart gives a man a right impression of himself, and a right impression of God and of his free grace and goodness; and it makes the man to become folding, tractable, pliant, and yielding to God, and also makes way for much spiritual sense and comfort, and for

God's refreshful manifesting of himself to the soul that is so pliable and tender: thus the Lord faith, Hos. ii. 14. "I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her," or to her heart, as the word is: alluring speaks pliableness, and that hath God's comfortable speaking to the heart following on it was not be some out to to the some or

The first use of this point serves to give you another mark for trial if things be right and in good cafe with you, for covenanting with God; and, as the upthat of all, to commend such a desirable frame as this to you. Would ve know then further, what is a right frame for covenanting with God? Here it is, even to have a heart-melting within, to have a foft, tender. and mournful disposition of soul. And would ve know what this is? We think, that from the words it may be gathered to confift in thete five or fix things that concur to it. 1. There are fome prickling challenges for fin and wrongs done to God: they humbly acknowledge, take with, and are made fenfible of thefe. 2. There is some missing and fensibleness of the want of God's presence, and of the want of communion and fellowthip with him : they know not well where he is, but they are afking after him. 3. There is an ardent affection and ferious defire to be at him and in covenant with him, a heart filled with love to God, whereby it is foftened and made to flow down, as wax by the fire is melted, and the hardest iron made foft. 4. There is a holy fear and carefulness, whereby the heart is kept from growing cold and indifferent as to its condition, and from fettling and fitting down in it; fuch a fear and trembling as old Eli had, it Sam. iv. for the ark, whereby he was kept in a fright: here is going and weeping, with a holy fear left the covenant be again broken. 5. There is a felf-loathing, kindly humiliation and exercise of repentance, which especially appears in this weeping; when serious looking into person's own condition so affects the heart, as it flows, either in tears without, and in fighs Lthat and groans within, or in the latter without the former. There is a holy indifferency as to their external lot, and an absolute submissiveness to the will of God, to be dealt with, and disposed upon as himself thinks fit: if so be they be admitted into a covenant with him, they are fweetly submiffive to the terms, let God do with them what he will: they know it will be well if they get once within the bond of his covenant; and that it will never be well with them, if they be without it. Though this be somewhat general, yet it will be found to be a near, yea, a narrow trial. If foftness of heart befoeak a good frame and fit for covenanting with God; ah! where is it? The little heart-foftness that is amongst us is one of the neck-breaks of religion, and mars our growth exceedingly. What shall we say or think of our condition, when we call to remembrance the feekers of God of old, who "watered their couches with tears, and made their beds to fwim;" who mingled their drink with tears, and their meat wirh weeping? O! what is become of that now? or what religion is this that we have in thefe days, in comparison of that which they had, who were to ferious and fo much affected and heart-wrought with their religion. when we are fo chil-cold and frozen, when our hearts are scarce kindly warmed, much less softened and melted? It is no wonder there be much lamenting for the want of fense and life, when there is so much heart-hardness, the contrary of this heart-melting foftnefs. (Arabba Laure 27 114-11)

> But it may be asked here, How comes it to pass, that the people of God are now fo unlike that which God's people were wont to be; fo little foftened, contrite, and melted? I speak not of external weeping and shedding of tears; for there may be much of that where the heart is but little foftened, though not ordinarily: often, when the heart is inwardly melted, external weeping in fome measure follows, though the one of these may be, and is sometimes without the other: neither do I speak of that softness which is pe-

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culiarly requisite for the communion; but of that which is called for in our ordinary walk, to make us folding, yielding, and pliable to God, ready to receive any impression that he will please to stamp on us? What, I fay, can be the causes of the want of this, or that we are not in it as God's people were wont to be? I answer, 1. It may be, that professors now have much more conceit of their profession, and content themselves better with the form, and with the gospel's being clearer now than it was in former days; and "God refifts the proud," yea, even pride in the godly. Trembling, and fuch other evidences of tenderness in several of those saints mentioned in the scripture, are not much to be found with us; we are, alas! very unlike them! a sharp word from God would have made the strongest of them to tremble; nav, the godly are several times in the old testament described to be " tremblers at the word:" but we, very generally, are bolftered up, in a manner, with much fout-heartedness and felf-conceit, as if we were above challenges, fears, doubtings, and puzzling cases of conscience: David, Job, Paul, and others of the faints, who had not fuch ground for that fort of exercise as most of us have, may I not fay, as all of us have? yet were more in it than we. Whence this comes, were worthy of our ferious inquiry: it is probable that pride and felf-conceit have much influence upon it. 2. We fear that Christians now-a-days have much betaken themselves to the external deckings and adornings of religion, with neglect, in part at least, and to the prejudice of religion itself, of the foul and substance of it: the godly themselves were fingle and plain in religion, (as Jacob is called "a plain man,") and taken up with the power of godliness; but many now are so much taken up with gifts, and are fo fond of them, that a covenant interest, self-denial, mortification, and the like, take them up the less. Many of you are at more labour and pains to hold up a name, than to mortify fuch a luft as is a felf-feeking humour, or to

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have matters thorough and clear betwixt God and you. 3. They made more and greater account of communion with God than we do; feeking after it was a thing they were taken up with, which now, alas! is much neglected: because here that our salvation doth not depend fimply on intimate-and familiar fellowship with God, we are the less careful and solicitous about it; whereas, if old, the want of it made them " fick of love," as the spouse is, Cant. v. And what longing, fainting, and outcrying is there for it, Pfal. xlii. ? It was a prison to them to be in a palace wanting God's company. This is a main thing that fotfens people's hearts, even to have the Lord manifesting himself, to have the light of his countenance lifted up, and the beams of his love and good-will thining warm on us: too much feeking of great things for ourselves, for grandeur or greatness in the world, in making godlines someway to be gain, and counting gain, as it were, to be godliness; alas! it is not much our care to have victory over the world, and that it may have little of our heart, and Christ much of it: it is not the defign that we drive with fuitable vigour, even to be heavenly-minded, and to bruik a foft heart: "Love not the world, (faith the apostle, I John ii. 15.) nor the things of the world; for wholo loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." They fo far overcame the world, that "they fuffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves they had a better and an enduring substance in heaven:" as it is, Heb. x. 34. But the wicked, and men of the world, "having what heart can wish, even waters of a full cup are wrung out to them;" God's people turn in thither, and will needs effay and try the comforts of a present world, what fatisfaction they can yield them, as we may fee Solomon did, to his great prejudice; for the things of the world in a great measure got the upper hand of him, and that "after the Lord had appeared to him twice." It were good, and much to be wished, that many of

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you did espy this evil in yourselves: the scripture insists much in it, as that which mens hearts are mainly
carried out after; and yet we can get none almost
convinced of it: men will be got convinced of gross
out-breaking evils; but of this evil the most earthlyminded worms cannot be gotten convinced: nay,
even good people are hardly got convinced of it; but
ye are not in the less hazard of it. And we wot well, it
is a plague in the generation that we live in, and hath
much defaced religion as to its beauty, in the sace of
the conversation of many; ah! how much are they,
in this, conform to the world! and how lamentably
little behave they like pilgrims and strangers in it, as
the saints did of old!

As a fecond use of this point, We have ground here to 'commend to you the study of a soul-fixing and fastening condition: as ye would not make an unfure bargain with God, endeavour to have this foftness and melting of heart. This thing is that which makes a man to "fit alone, and to keep filence before God," Lam. iii. 27. and fo to be in a posture of meeting and covenanting with him. Such of you who know nothing of this, and are not afraid of being hard, cold, and dead at fuch an occasion, are in imminent bazard of lofing a good bargain; and wo to fecurity and hardness, that hath that as the fruit of it! And, in the by, we may fay, that there is a wo abiding many of you, who have no ferious thoughts of this frame, and especially at fuch a time. Therefore let me exhort you to compose yourselves, as having to do with God, and as having God's love and favour, and his hatred and wrath laid together in the balance, and as having life and death fet before you; and feriously to feek after fuch a foft and tender frame of foul, that fits for covenanting, for renewing the covenant, and for comfortable communicating.

But some may object and say, It is very sad, if this be peremptory, that persons who would rightly renew their covenant, and communicate, must be in a soft in-

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and melting frame. Answ. It is useful, and it is needful: nay, in some measure it is simply necessary. What shall we then do that want it? For answer, I wish many were asking the question, from serious minding, prizing, and longing after the thing: for the want of foftness proceeds often from this, that we do not feriously mind it; otherwise, the want of it would much affect and afflict us, and would put us to alk after it, and God would not fail to give them direction that were thus afking the way to Zion. Yet, for your help in this matter, I would fay thefe three words, 1. Once take a view of your case, and labour to have a distinct look of it; what lusts are up, what challenges may be tabled, and keep a good count of them. 2. Endeavour to have faith in exercise on God's covenant and promifes, and be fure that the promife is ficker that ye lay hold on, and fee that ye make use of it according to the covenant; which is done, when with your fouls ye take hold of it: and that is not, nor shall not be reckoned prefumption, when ye beftir yourselves from the faith of God's covenant and promifes, laying the weight of that which ye would be at on the promife, cleaving thereto for attaining of it; and in time, through God's bleffing, your unfuitableness shall piece-mail wear away, and ye shall become tender: and any bit of foftness and tenderness that ye win at, cherish and watch over it. 3. Make this a particular errand to God, having your eye on the covenant of promises, and on this promise in it in particular, and on other promises of this nature and to this purpole, as concerning "taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh; of giving you a new heart; of making you to loath yourselves for all your abo minations:" apprehending, receiving, and clofing with Christ in the covenant, for attaining of it as a fruit of his purchase: for it is not gotten but in the covenant; and therefore it is remarkable that this scripture is fet down promise ways, "They shall come, the children of Israel and the children of Judah together." Your

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heavenly Father, who knows that ye have need of this thing, (as it is, Mat. vi. 32.) "will give his holy Spirit to them that ask him:" as it is, Luke, xi. 13. And ye should credit and trust him with the performing of that promise to you: and, endeavouring to be serious in having this for your task and work, ye shall find it made good for you and to you.

SERMON XI.

We should stir up ourselves to covenant with God.

On JER. 1. 5.

Come, and let us join ourfelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

It is a most desirable design, and worthy to be driven vigorously by us all, to the prosecution whereof it would very well become us to stir up and rouse ourselves, and one another, according to the laudable practice of these here mentioned, even to hasten towards a closure of the covenant of grace betwixt God and us; to have it sounding loud in our ears, and to have it as the language of our hearts whetted to an edge in purseit of the thing, "Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten." It should be the great work and business of a communion-sabbath, in a special manner, as it is our professed design this day, to close and make sure this covenant and blessed bond betwixt the Lord and us.

Having spoken somewhat formerly at several occafions to these sweet words, I shall not now trouble ď.

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you either with the division or explication of them; but shall instantly propose six or seven observations from them, and them speak a word to the scope, and the application of them, in the close: and though it be but a short word from each of them that we have to speak, yet they will be found to be very concerning to us, and therefore we should take the more exact notice of them.

The first observation then is, "That there is such a thing as diffinct covenanting, or mutual engaging in covenant betwixt God and a poor finner." This is clearly holden out in these words as their scope: it were to no purpose for them to say, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant," if there were not fuch a thing as a covenant-union of God and finners. The scripture is full to this purpose, and the treaty of ordinances is kept up for this end; as we have it. Ifa. lv. 1, 2, 3. " Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters, &c. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your fouls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." This is the scope that the ordinances aim at. In profecuting of this a little further, we shall, first, Explicate what covenanting with God is in general. Secondly, What this covenanting with God is: 1. In respect of the parties. 2. In respect of the terms thereof. 3. In respect of the ground on which it is founded. And, thirdly, To the form of this covenanting.

First, then, Covenanting in general may be cleared, from what covenanting among men is: which is a mutual engaging of two parties on mutual terms; theone party offering such a thing on such terms and conditions, the other party accepting on those terms and conditions on which the offer is made. As we see in a contract of marriage, the man engageth to be the woman's, on condition that she be his; and she engageth to be his wife, as he engageth to be her husband; and each engageth to perform suitable duties to

the other. And we make use of this, the rather that the scripture alludesh to it in this matter.

Secondly. We are to confider covenanting as it is betwixt God and a finner; for we are not now fpeak. ing of the covenant of works betweet God and Adam. wherein there was made an offer and promise of life upon condition of perfect obedience; so that if he did that which was commanded him, he should live: but we are now speaking of God's covenanting with a sinner; for that is the covenant spoken of here. It is indeed a great wonder, that ever there should have been a covenant betwixt God and a creature; but a greater wonder, that there should be a covenant betwixt him and a finful creature: whatever is fooken in scripture of the covenant of grace, belongs to this covenant. . 1. The parties in this covenant are God and the finner, God's creature, but a finful creature; it is the Lord Jehovah, and we the house of Israel, and we the house of Judah. 2. The terms of the covenant are not, "Do this, and live." Though the promife be the same, for it is life that is offered; yet it is not on the fame terms: for, though the life be as good as that which was promifed to Adam, yet the terms are far better: the fubstance of this covenant we have fet down, Jer. xxx. \$1, 32, 33. and cited Heb. viii, 10, 11, 12. unto which this fame invitation doth here relate: " I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their father:" but this shall be it, " I will write my law in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," &c. And, " Come, (fay they here) and let us join in it." His engagement is to be their God, and their engagement is to be his people; and the terms are as follow, which are, on God's part, free forgiveness of fins, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, through whom they are accepted, as if there had never been a quarrel; and, on their part, by faith to take hold of him, and of the pardon of fin,

which feparated betwixt him and them, through Jefus

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God and finners; and therefore these two are put to-

gether, Ifa. liii. 3. " Incline your ear, come unto me; hear, and your fouls shall live: and I will make an

everlasting covenant with you, even the fure mercies of David:" that is, the fure mercies of the Meffiah,

Christ, as he is offered to them. Therefore, Rom. x. 6. it is called "the righteousness of faith," opposed to "the righteousness of the law," spoken of before; and what faith it? It faith not, "Who shall go up to heaven?" nor, " Who shall descend into the deep?" But the word is nigh thee, excn in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the righteousness of faith, which we preach; "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That is, if ye make fuitable use with Christ for your peace with God, and give up yourselves to him to be his fervants, ye shall get peace and pardon of fin here, and eternal life and falvation hereafter: these, in short, are the terms on which God offereth himself to finners. 3. The ground of this, and how it comes to pass that such a covenant is accessible, is the Mediator's interposing in a covenant of redemption with the Father concerning elect finners; wherein he hath procured this covenant of grace betwixt God and finners, by his performing the condition required of him in that covenant; for this covenant of grace and reconciliation is nothing elfe but the refult of the covenant of redemption, and the execution thereof: we had never had ground to fay, that there is a way laid down for our peace with God, except there had been a covenant of redemption betwixt him and the Mediator, wherein the Mediator undertook to fatisfy justice for the fins of the elect, by bearing their iniquities; and hath the promise of being " satisfied with the travail of his foul, by his feeing of a feed, and by his justifying many through faith in him:" as it is, Ifa. liii. 11. This gives the rife to this covenant of grace betwixt

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the affignation whereof, even of the purchase of redemption made by him, is by covenant made over to the believer in him: and therefore, when we fpeak of this covenant, it always supposeth and implieth Christ, who, Ifa. xhi. 6. is called the Covenant, because he is given for the ground of covenanting betwixt God and finners; it being by him, and in him, that God and finners meet; there being a gulf, as it were, betwixt finners and God, he hath made himself the bridge on which finners may come over and meet with God; and the covenant brings us to Christ: as, under the the law, Christ was typed out by the mercy-feat and the ark, wherein the law was put, to flew the linking together of Christ and the covenant; the efficacy of the covenant flowing from Christ, and the covenant giving us a title to Christ, and making Christ access. ible to us; it lays, as it were, a bridge to us to step on, and makes an open door to us to enter in by, on Christ, and by Christ to the "holy of holies through the vail, which is his flesh."

Thirdly, As for the form of this covenanting, it is, as in other contracts, God making the offer, and the person accepting it: God's offer is in the word of the gospel, where he saith, "Come, and I will make a covenant with vou;" as the apostle hath it, Rom. x. "The word is near thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth:" and the fum of it is, " If ye believe in Jesus Christ, ye shall be faved." The proposing whereof in the gospel, is the laying of God's offer before you; and it is as really God's offer, as if audibly he were speaking to you from heaven, as he once fpake the law on mount Sinai: it being his authority, by which ministers are sent to treat and close this covenant with you; as it is, 2 Cor. v. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were befeeching you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God:" that is, be friends with him, by entering into covenant with him : and he sheweth us the ground of it, " For he; who knew ho fin, was made fin for us, that

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we might be made the righteoufness of God in him." God's offer is, I am content to be thy God, and to make all that is mine forthcoming to thee for thy good, upon condition thou quit thy own righteoulnels, and betake thee to my Son the Mediator for righteourness and life. The finner's covenanting is his formal and diffinct, at least his real confenting to that offer on these terms, faying with his very heart, I am content to have God to be my God, not by virtue of any thing in myfelf, but by virtue of Christ's fatisfaction, which hath procured access to finners for peace and reconciliation with God; and this is called "a fubmitting to Christ's righteousness." So then, there is a devoting of the foul to God, a hearty confenting to give itself away to him, to be faved and fanctified, to live to him and to his honour; as it is, Ifa. xliv. c. "One shall fay, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." As if it were faid, Whose are you? and the person should fay, "I am God's:" for, as plainly and distinctly, at least as really and solidly, a person wrought upon by God's Spirit, gives the answer and return to God's offer in his covenant, and religns himself to God, as if paper were laid down before him, and he flould subscribe his name with his hand to be God's. There is an obligation taken on, and a confent plainly given; the persons with the very heart subscribing the contract, which, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. is called a "yielding or giving the hand to God." He cometh with stretched-out arms in the gospel, and faith, Man or woman, who findest thyself lost, close with me in my Son Christ, and thou shalt be faved; and our consenting is, our heart's catching hold of that word, and yielding to him, as one striking hands with another with whom he hath before been at odds and variance, in fign of his being content and fatisfied to be reconciled to him, and of his being to in very deed. The fecond observation is, " That this covenanting

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with God hath with it, or in it, a near union and conjunction with the Lord. " Let us (fay they) join our: felves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant." The word joining hath in it a special emphasis, being such as is used to set out the conjunction that is betwixt the husband and wife: " For this cause (saith the Lord) shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife:" and fo the wife cleaveth to her husband. Thus the word is, Gen. xxix. 34. " Now shall my husband be joined to me; therefore she called his name Levi:" which flows from this root, added or joined. In profecuting this point a little, we would fpeak shortly, 1. To the nature of this union. 2. To the properties of it. 1st, As to its nature, we would confider that there is, 1. A legal union, wherein by contract and bond there is a transferring of the interest of one party to another, which is here; for God becomes the finner's God, and the finner becomes God's own, as his portion and property: even as, in marriage, the husband is the wife's, and the wife the husband's; and thus the relation stands, though they should be in several kingdoms. 2. There is a mystical union, which is spiritual and more mysterious, whereby God becometh one with covenanting finners, and they become one with him; God by his Spirit dwelling in the covenanter, and the covenanter, dwelling by faith in God: which floweth from the former mutually transferred right or legal union, and followeth on it; in which respect it is said, I Cor. vi. 17, " He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit;" he is "God's temple," and "God by his Spirit dwells in him." By this one Spirit, is meant a spiritual conjunction, union, or communion; whereby God takes hold really of the foul by his Spirit, and the foul takes a real hold of God by faith: they do mutually embrace each other, as the husband doth the wife, by virtue of their union. 3. This union implieth a nearness, a friendliness, an intimacy, and familiarity, and it is opposed to distance and estrangement from God:

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the covenant, really entered into, is like a bond to keep the believer near God, glued, as it were, and straitly joined to him; or it is a cementing with God, to speak so. By this covenant God and sinners are made near, and knit to one another, and kept from ever feparating; there is fuch a near and frait union betwixt Christ and believers, as is betwixt the foundation or corner stone and the house, yea, as is betwixt -

the vine and the branches, Eph. ii. John xv.

adly, As for the properties of this union by covenant, a few of which we shall only now touch at, not having access to enlarge, as this subject by itself would require. r. It is with the Lord himself, not with any benefit, common gift, or grace, or mercy: thefe follow the union with himself: the covenanter becomes " one spirit with him," as is faid : and faith the apostle, Eph. v. "We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." 2. This union is in and through Christ, by whom it is made up; he being the temple and tabernacle, or meeting-place, wherein we meet with God. So that we are not anxiously to inquire, nor curiously to dispute here, how our union with God, and with the Mediator do differ: we unite with God in him, and upon the ground of his redemption, in which respect our union with God is more mediate. 3. This union is very friendly, most firm, and indissoluble: it is a wonderful near and fure union. It is an inexpreffible union, therefore we must here give over speaking further to it, only looking to a word of it, John xvii. 21, 23. in the 21. verse, faith our Lord, " That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us." It is such an union, by the believer's being in God and in the Mediator, as is that, whereby God and the Mediator are one; though no parity is here to be understood, but a refemblance only. And, ver. 23. "I in them, and thou in in me; that they may be made perfect in one." "I in them;" here the union is most immediate: "and thou in me," there the union is most mediate,

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viz. by God's being in the Mediator, dwelling in the believer, and the believer's dwelling in God, (the fulness of the Godhead being in the Mediator) by his meeting with God through faith in the Mediator: and indeed, were there no more but this, it faith that this co-

venant is a good bargain.

The third observation is, "That union with the Lord by this covenant is accessible to a run-away finner, that hath perverted his way, upon his coming aright to close with him therein on the terms of it." Who are those coming here to join in covenant with the Lord? It is even those spoken of, Jer. iii. 6, 7. " Backfliding children, treacherous dealers," who are bidden " return, and he will heal their backflidings:" which could not be, if this covenant were not accelfible to finners. Nay, let me fay, there is scarce any fort of fin, but the Lord out-faceth it in his covenant; as we may fee, Jer. iii. where the Lord faith, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; thou hast spoken and done evil as thou couldst: yet, wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?" If we look to the groffness of fin, were it like "fcarlet or crimson, Isa. i. 18. it shall be made white like snow and wool; if ye be willing and obedient," faith the Lord, to close a covenant with me, " ye shall eat the good of the land." In the propounding of the covenant, he will take away that exception of the groffness of fin, which might stand in the sinner's way, were it even rotten hypocrify, detestable indifferency, and lukewarmness in the matters of God, putting the perfon in hazard to be spewed out of Christ's mouth; yet he faith to fuch, (if they will indeed take his counsel, and be content to have their deadly evils removed, and their wants supplied) "I counsel thee to come and buy of me eye falve, gold, and garments." And, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and fup with him, and he with me." Only take this word of advertisement here, and I shall clear and confirm

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the doctrine further. When then, we speak of finners access to God by this covenant, we mean, that there is access only on condition they take with their faults, and come weeping, heart-broken, and fomeway fuitably affected with their fin: thefe only are the persons that may comfortably expect this access; he seeks after fuch, though he will find none fuch till he make them fuch. For further clearing and confirming of it then, we would confider these four things. t. God's end in the covenant, which will make out this, that there must be access to a run-away sinner by this covenant, to union with God, when he comes home to him in the way of repentance and believing; because his end in the covenant is " to fave finners," often spoken of; to "justify the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. to "dwell with rebels," Pfal.lxviii. 18. to "get a name and a praise to himself," of being gracious. As it cannot admit of, nor let in a finner, but on this condition; fo it cannot but accept of a finner having this condition. 2. We would confider God's contrivance of the covenant, in making it fuitable to fuch an end, to as it may make the riches of his grace to thine, and may be effectual for the gaining of fouls; and therefore, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. it is faid, in this respect, to be "ordered in all things and fure:" and Jer. xxxi. 33. compared with Heb. viii. the substance of it is set down, compended in a few words, "I will pardon their iniquity, and remember their fin no more," &c. 3. We would confider the administration of that covenant: it is not in an immediate way, as that first covenant made with Adam was, wherein there was no Mediator, neither was there need of any; but it was in a mediate way, by a Surety and Mediator, who hath taken on and engaged for the debt of the covenanting finner, and hath undertaken for his through-bearing. Now, why is this administration and dispensation? but because the principal debtor is a bankrupt, and not able to fatisfy for himself; therefore he hath access to come and get pardon, and to be friends with

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God through the Mediator. 4. We would confider all the properties of the covenant, especially the freeness of it, and we will find that they speak out this: it is a covenant of "fure mercies," Ifa. lv. 3. and all the promises and articles of it respect samers, and hold forth this, that there is a way laid down, how a sinner, at feud with God, may get this union made up by co-

venanting with him.

The fourth observation is, " That covenanting with God is a very thort cut for the quieting, peace, and happiness of a treacherous backsliding finner." There, fore when these people, here spoken of, are, in their hely heat and warmness, stirred up under the conviction and fense of their guilt, as the short cut to come to peace and a happy condition, they fay, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant." It is the accepting of God's offer, and being content to be his on the account of Christ's righteousness, that they propose to themselves as the ground of their calm, quietness, and happiness. This observation implies these three things: 1. That covenanting with God doth fully make the covenanter happy, though formerly he hath been a miferable finner; and O this is a good bargain, that makes a finner completely happy! it makes him to fay, "Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there none upon the earth that I defire besides thee," Pfal. lxxiii. I shall name a few scriptures, to shew the full happiness of a sinner that enters in this covenant: the first whereof is, a Sam. xxiii. 5. " Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and fure; and this is all my falvation and all my defire:" it is mensura voti, even all that heart can wish. And these words being confidered, as " David the fweet finger of Ifrael"-his last words, when he is a-dying, they clearly imply a commendation of this covenant as full for the happiness of a finner. Another passage is, Rev. xxi. 7. " He that overcometh shall inherit all things." How is that?

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even thus, " I will be his God, and he shall be my fon:" that is, in substance, I will declare myself to be in covenant with him. This is the compend of the complete happinels of glorified faints in heaven, and the begun happiness of believers, of sojourning saints here on earth, in a less measure and lower degree; for in heaven God "will be all in all." And is not this a good bargain, and good to finners? which commends it the more. A third place is, Rom. viii. where it is told us, that nothing can be "laid to their charge," but it is answered in this covenant. They have a Cautioner to pay their debt, and to strengthen them for their duty: "I will (faith he) be their God, and they shall be my people: I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me: I will pardon their iniquities, (all bygones) and heal their backflidings," they shall not get leave to go from me: would ye be pliable and yielding to God's covenant? "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and a new heart will I give unto them, and will cause them to walk in my statutes, and to do them." 2. The doctrine implies, as it is a full covenant, or makes the covenanter fully happy, so it makes him fickerly and furely happy: 2 Sam. xxv. 5 it is a " covenant well ordered in all things, and fure." Whoever by faith betake themselves to Christ's righteourners, and lay hold on his covenant, may expect communion with God, as certainly as Adam before the fall had it; for it is the same God that promiseth, who is as faithful as ever he was: hence it is called "a word tried as filver in a furnace feven times;" a pure word, that cometh out of the furnace always as maffy and weighty as it went in. And the ground of the covenant being Christ's fatisfaction, it makes it lure; therefore he is called a " tried Corner-stone, a sure, Foundation." 3. It implies that as it is a fure, so it is a compendious and speedy way to happiness, and of deliverance to the finner; which maketh much for God's praise: he is a "very present help in time of trouble,

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or a speedy help," Psal. xlvi. So, Psal. xxxii. 5. "I said, (faith David) I would confess my transgression, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," immediately (as if he had said) upon my confession, without longer delay: and, Rom. iv. 7. this psalm is made use of, to demonstrate the righteousness which is by faith in Christ.

The fifth observation is, "That sinners who are lying under a quarrel with God, and have the offer of a covenant, should betake themselves to it, and without delay put a close to the bargain betwixt God and them. Come, (fay they here) and let us join ourfelves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant;" whereby is holden out, that, when a finner hath access to the covenant with God, he should flee to it, and take hold of it quickly. In this respect covenanting with God is compared to "fleeing into the city of refuge," Heb. vi. That which I mean is, 1. That a linner who hath this covenant in his offer should take no other way for justification and freedom from fin and wrath, but hold out to this only, and feek to be justified by it. 2. That he should do it speedily: when the word of the gospel faith, Come; he should answer, "Lo, I come unto thee?" when God by the preaching of the gospel maketh a gracious declaration, that he will accept of loft finners that come to him, and faith, " This is the day of falvation, this is the accepted time," as it is, 2 Cor. vi. 3. and when by his ministers he waiteth on you, inviteth and wooth you, ye should presently, without delay or demur, close with the offer, and accept of the invitation.

The fixth observation is, "That those who are convinced that they have sinned, and would fain be in covenant with God, should endeavour to have it thoroughed and made sure, to have it an absolutely closed and ended bargain." This is very clear in this people's practice, who concernedly say, "Come, let us join ourselves in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten:" they think they cannot get it made sure enough, and therefore they join in a covenant "never

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to be forgotten, to be perpetual;" they judged that it could not possibly be made too fure: which manifestly faith, that when God giveth an opportunity to enter into, or renew a covenant with him, we should be ho. fily folicitous, in very good earnest, and greatly coneerned to have it made ficker, as the word is, Neh. ix. last verse, "We make a sure covenant and write it, and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it." That word, Ifa. xliv. 5. is remarkable to this purpose, "One shall fay, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himfelf by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord:" that it might stand, as it were, over his head, as being formally and explicitly engaged, with heart and hand: and they that know how fickle and inconstant their hearts are, and how prone to deal loofely and unfaithfully in God's covenant, have good reason to look to this, that all be sure work; that they get not the shell for the kernel, and go not down to the grave with a lie in their right hand.

The feventh observation is, "That there are some times befide other times, wherein some peor le beside others have it pungently put to them to enter in, and to renew their covenant with God." These here spoken of, who fay, having God's pressing call to it, before they faid it one to another, "Come, and let us join to the Lord in a covenant," are put to it more than others, and at this time more than at another. word, people are then put to it in a more especial manner, 1. At fuch a time when the gospel is clearly, convincingly, and powerfully preached unto thempreaching of the gospel being God's way of meeting and treating with finners, and the ministers and preachers thereof being as his ambaffadors commissioned and fent forth by him to treat, and close a treaty with finners; on the terms contained in their commission; which, when they with fuitable concernedness and earnestness do, their hearers are the more put to it. 2. They are thus put to it, when some stirring and warmness of affection towards covenanting with God

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is wrought in them; or when their own frame, through grace, preffeth them on to it; as we may fee it did in this people. 3. When the Lord oftener than once or twice, in frequently renewed opportunities of this kind, puts people to it; and more especially in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: the very fight and offer of the elements in the communion speak plainly, on the matter to the communicants, Are ye indeed in earnest in the great business of covenanting with God, fince ye are now to receive the feal of it? If ye be not, ve notably profane the ordinance, by fetting a feal to a blank charter: it is therefore called the Covenant, "This is the cup of the new covenant;" because it puts you in mind of the covenant, and puts you to it, whether ye will really engage in it. It is like the king's appointing a day for fealing of pardons to rebels; his proclamation first puts them to it, to accept of the pardon; next the heralds put them to it; and then, laftly, the fet and fixed time or day of the fealing, puts them most of all to it; so it is with you in this ordinance, that we are by and by to be about.

We come now to the application of all, wherein we shall not insist on all things that these doctrines minister ground for; but shall pitch on some most affell, and which are the great scope of the text and

of the day.

And in the first place, I would befeech you to endeavour to gather and to compose yourselves, and gravely to ponder what it is that this day ye are pressingly called to: it is even this, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." Know and believe that there is such a thing as covenanting with God; that God is dealing with you to covenant with him; and that it is a good bargain: "To you is this word of salvation sent." And ye should be very seriously thinking how to get it accepted and made use of, how to receive this offer by saith, and how to get yourselves given up and away to him; because in this covenant (as I shewed before) there is a mutual engaging: God

offers himself, and all that is in him, to be ours, and to be made forthcoming for our good; and we by faith close with the offer, and give up ourselves to him to be at his disposal. Have ye any serious thoughts of this? Put yourselves to it, and we in the name of the Lord put you to it; for we cannot well proceed any further, till ye be at some point in this: Are ye in earnest? is this your errand in being here today? if not, why are ye come hither? is it to fee how the day goeth? or is it only to get your communion,: as ye use to speak? Alas! what is that? it is to covenant with God, and, ere ye depart this place, to put it to a point, that it may be a closed bargain, that should

be your errand.

And therefore, in the second place, we tell you, that the great God is content to covenant with poor, fecklefs, and finful creatures; whereat we may wonder, and fay, Is it so " in very deed that God will dwell. with men on earth?" will he indeed covenant with men, with finful men, with treacherous-dealing men, with backfliders? Yea, we tell you that it is so; he is content to be your God, and that ye possess all things in him; content to pardon you all your fins, to give you grace and glory, even every good thing; to enter. you heirs to a kingdom, and on good and easy terms; to do it freely, " without money and without price," if ye be but indeed content to accept of his offer on. his eafy and very reasonable terms; and may not your very hearts laugh within you at the hearing of the glad tidings of this covenant, and that God is yet content to make it up with you? O how fappy and mafly is this! and that is a very sweet word to this purpole which we have, Pfal. xwi. 6: "God, even our own God shall bless us;" which may make the believer smile. This relation of our own maketh the blef. fing double; and it flows from this formal (at least real) covenanting and union with God, that the believer hath a right to this and all things: he hath here an offer, and another fort of right, than he hath to his

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house and land or clothes; it is a right to God that giveth a right to these things, I mean a spiritual right; for we speak not now of that which is civil: Let us therefore stay ourselves and wonder, and be stirred and affected with it, that the infinite and all-sufficient God is content to make this good bargain, and even now to make it with us sinners, even with insignisicant and unworthy us.

3dly, We make proclamation of this bargain to you. and avouch, that there is falvation offered to finners. and to be had through Jefus Christ: the Lord alloweth and warranteth us make this proclamation, as well as he did Jeremiah, when he faith to him, chap. iii. 12. " Go and proclaim these words towards the north. Return, thou backfliding Ifrael, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon thee; for I am merciful, faith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever." He alloweth, nay, he peremptorily commandeth that ye should be put to it; and therefore, when we have laid the covenant before you, what fay ye to it? what will ye do? we must have an answer from you: ye have his word and oath for confirmation of it. O believe and take hold of it, and ye shall get the feal from us as his commissioners, who treat with you, according to our commission, in his name. And here we must be particular, and be ye particular with yourfelves: take heed and receive what we fay to you with a warrant, as the word of the Lord; for it is no less his word now, than it was when Jeremiah and the other prophets spoke it, when the apostles spoke it, yea, when Christ spake it himself: it is the same covenant, and the fame word, that this day is preached to you; the Lord calls us to flir up ourfelves, and to fay in good earnest, " Come, and let us join to him in a perpetual covenant." . The party inviting is the Lord Jehovah in the Mediator; and fure he is a moft, yea, the most excellent: "The Maker (faith he, Ifa. liv. 8.) is thy husband." 2. There are in this covenant excellent promises: God is content to be your God, and

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to take you for his people and spouse, to pardon your iniquity, to heal your backflidings, to fanctify and fave you, and to make you eternally happy; and are not these defirable? 3. It calls you to give yourselves up to him; and indeed it is very reasonable, that, if the husband give himself to the wife, she should give herself to him. Are ye then content to treat with God in the Mediator, and to be his on his own terms? It is good to meet and treat with God in him. Have ye any ground to except against this? doth it please or displease you? say to it, tell your mind; for I declare to you, that, if ye get him to be yours, ye must needs be his. I fear many of you stand and stick at this, notwithstanding the high reasonableness of it. Is this think ye, an evil, difadvantageous, or prejudicial exchange? Whether is it better that the one and only true God reign over you, than that Satan and a multitude of strange lords, your lusts, taking the throne, as it were, by turns, should reign over you? It is both fad and stupenduous, that ever this should be suffered once to come in question or debate; and yet, alas! it is this, or fomething like this, at which it will fland. Either ve will not take God for your God, or ve will not give yourselves to be his people, on his own very reasonable and easy terms; and I trow, ye will make no better. I would, therefore, yet again put you to it; for it is the very thing ye are called to, the great business of the day, and it is come even to the fhock.

And therefore, labour to be at a point, whether ye will close with him or not: if ye will fincerely say, We take the Lord to be our God, and give ourselves to him, to be his people and servants; then we say to you, and affire you in his name, that this cup, that by and by ye are to drink, shall be, according to his warrant, "the new covenant in his blood." And, to press you to the thing, let me ask you a few questions.

1. Is there not need of covenanting with God? are there not many sins on your score? is there not a

quarrel betwixt God and you? is not this bargain meet? and fuitable for you, which holds out remission of sins and peace with God? are we not urgently called to it? And what ground of challenge will it be, think ye, that this was in your offer, and on very free and easy terms, and ye would not accept of it, but would needs deftroy yourselves? 2: If there be fin and a quarrel; is there not a necessity to have it taken away? Have ye laid your account, and refolved not to be folicitousand careful, whether ye be friends with God or not? And, if ye will not fay that, why do we not enter into this covenant? 3. Is there any other way to get fin pardoned, and the quarrel taken away, but by making fure your covenant with God? David, or any others that were faved, were they faved any other way? This covenant was "all his falvation, and all his defire." 4. What will ve fay in the day of the Lord, when the trumpet shall found, and he shall call you to an account for refuling his free and gracious offer; when there will be no more treating with you; when he shall fay, and make your own conscience say to you, It was plainly told you there was a quarrel flanding betwixt me and you; it was told you that I was willing to enter into a covenant with you, and to remove that quarrel; I fent my messengers unto you for this end, but ye made light of the matter? Say to it, O fay to it; ye mult fay fomething, yea, or nay; ve are not left to be indifferent, and to keep up yourselves in this matter: I tell you, if ye fay not yea, ye fay nay; and as the apostle speaks, Acts xiii. 46: ve pass sentence on yourfelves, " and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life:" it is interpretively a faying, that ye will not. have heaven and life though Christ: and therefore, as ye would not destroy your own fouls, I befeech you, nay, I obtest you in the name of the Lord, and for his fake, accept of this covenant. We tell you, and as the apostle hath it, we say, "Be it known unto you, that, through Jesus Christ, remission of fine is preached to you;" he hath purchased life and salvation to

finners; and, "To you is the word of this falvation fent." Give, O give your confent to the bargain, and

that is all we feek of you.

Now, to profecute this a little, and to put you yet further to it, because it will lie before God, whether we have put you to it or not, and whether ye have accepted of this covenant or not; whether we were in earnest in proposing it, and whether we were in earnest in closing with it: Consider, 1. The persons whom we put to this, and the things that we put you to: 2. The terms on which: 3. The grounds from which: and, 4. The qualifications and directions whereby.

First, As for the persons whom we put and press to this covenanting with God: it is not those only who have gotten their tokens, warranting them to come to the table, nor those only that are debarred, and fo have got no tokens; but it is all of you, " those who are afar off, and near hand;" but differently; to the tender foul we fay, Come forward; to the fecure we fay, Humble yourselves, and then come and join in this covenant. The thing we call you to, is to take the Lord to be your God, and to give up yourfelves to be God's; we call you to take God to be your Master, your Father, your Saviour, your Head, your Husband, your Friend, even your All: and that is no ill nor small offer; and we call you to give up yourselves to God, to forsake your father's house, and all your kindred, and cleave to him; to " join yourselves to the Lord," as the text hath it; and as it is faid, the prodigal "joined himself to a certain citizen," fo ye should join yourselves to the Lord, and be beholden to him for your life.

Secondly, As for the terms, they are in short, That seeing God saith, Accept of my Son's righteousness, and ye shall be my sons and daughters; we would freely accept of it, and take and put Christ's righteousness in the place and room of self-righteousness which was in the covenant of works; found your plea before God on nothing that we can do, but on

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Christ's doing and suffering for you, which now by faith ye resolve to adhere to: and resign yourselves to him without any reservation, to be guided and saved

by him, in his own way.

As for the third, How, or from and by what grounds we put you to this? or rather, How doth the Lord put us all to it? 1. Ye are put to it by his offer in the gofpel, which, in difcretion, calls you to give him an anfwer: he cries, "Come unto me, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the fure mercies of David:" and, doth he not require an answer? and, is it not incumbent on us, who speak to you in his name, to crave your answer? We declare to you all, that ye may, if ye will, come to be joined with God in covenant, and may be fure to be accepted of as his if ye come aright. Now, what fay ye to it? Either ye must look on this as a cheat or cunning devised fable; or, if ye dare look on it fo, ye must accept of it, and make it welcome. 2. Ye are put to it in this re. fpett, that the Lord brings you now and then under fome conviction of the necessity of your peace with God: fomething within you faith, that peace with God is worth the having, and needful: that this is a good bargain, and that ye have need of it; and there are now and then fome raw refolutions that should put it to a point. And it may be there is something presently that puts you to it; and if not, so much the more ye should put yourselves to it, lest " the kingdom of God be taken from you." 3. Ye are put to it by this fame facrament. Is it possible that ye can take the communion for a feal and confirmation, except ye covenant with God before? If ye will not covenant, ye prove yourselves to be treacherous diffemblers in going to the communion, and to be liars to God: when he presents and offers his covenant, ye profess to take his offer, and to close the covenant with him; but ye refuse, as it were, to take the pen in your hand, or do throw it away: when he prefents to you the cup of the new testament, ye drink the wine, and

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fpill the blood, and fo become "guilty of the body" and blood of the Lord," when ye despise it, and will not make use of it, nor covenant with God that ye may get the use of it. And therefore, 4. Know, that ye are put to it presently and peremptorily, and that the Lord will take it for a refusal, and for a scorning, and despising on your part, if ye do it not; and do ye think it a little matter to have such a guilt lying on your score? What know ye if ever God shall offer to feal a covenant with you again? And therefore we put you to it peremptorily, as to these three. (1.) As to the thing, that, when he invites, you come; when he offers, ye receive, and give the Lord your answer, not a nay-fay, but a yea, as ye will be answerable: and, upon your faying Yea to this covenant on his terms, we declare in his name, that he fays Yea, in taking in the finner that fleeth unto him. (2.) As to the whole of the thing: for we must not halve God's covenant; but as ye accept of God to be yours, so ye must give up yourselves to him to be his; and as ye take Christ for paying of your debt, so also ve must take him to help you to do your duty: take all therefore, and submit yourselves intirely to him in this covenant. (3.) As to the time, ye must do all this prefently; for the Lord doth not allow us to give you an hour, or to promife to treat with you one hour after this; it is now, " Come, and let us join ourfelves to the Lord." It is no difficult thing that ye are called to; it is " to believe with the heart, and to confess with the mouth our Lord Jefus Christ," as it is, Rom. x. 9. The object is Christ; the condition is faith, whereby he is gripped and taken hold of, and which goeth out towards him in the word: and fo ye have no more ado, but, when the offer and promife comes out, to accept and subscribe, and to fav, "I am the Lord's, I will be his, to be faved by his righteouinefs, and made holy by his grace," both which are contained in the covenant; I am content to be beholden to him both for holiness and happiness; and it shall

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be a bargain. The Lord himself persuade you to do to, and that presently, without delaying, dallying, or shifting and off-putting.

Now, it may be, that fome think this to be a good bargain, but they know not how to make it fure and ficker, fo as it may hold for ever. And therefore this is the last thing, that, in the fourth place, we would speak a little to, viz. How shall a person covenant with God, and know that he hath done so in very deed? (for the directions how to covenant are fo many evidences of covenanting, when performed,) For directions then in this matter: we would in general, in the ist place, have ground to suppose and take it for granted that ye know what we are, even finners, and that fin hath laid the foundation of a quarrel betwixt God and you; and that ye know what he is deligning and doing by this preached gofpel, even to bring finners into this covenant, and to have an union made up betwist him and them. But ye will, belike, fay, I know not how to make it fure. There is no anfwer to this, but, Be doing, till ye get it made fure; for your unfareness must flow, either from something on God's fide, or from fomething on your fide: ye dare not, I suppose, say that it slows from any thing on God's fide, or, if ye should, this is the way to make him fure (to speak so); and, if it flow from something on your fide, he bids you "Return, backfliding children, and he will heal your backflidings," and make it fure. But, in the next place, and more particularly, consider, i. Your end and design, what ye would be at. Ye may have some general aim at something that is good in itself; but that is not enough, it must be formething more particular and peculiar: is it to get God to be your God? doth that fill your eye? Is it to get your backflidings healed as well as pardoned? That is right, if your aim be to have God and fpiritual good. I mention this the rather, because some may love God and the covenant, for fome temporal good i whereas others love him and his covenant mainly for a spiritual good, and think themselves well come to and made up thereby. Wherein lies the difference? will ye fay. I answer, in a word, To love God and the covenant only or mainly for temporal mercies, is ill and felfish; but to love God and his covenant, to be thereby really happy in the enjoyment of him, and to be made conform to him in holinefs. is good and defirable, and neither felfish, nor fervile and mercenary: as it is no unkindly-like token in a wife to love her husband, to be delighted in him, and to like well to enjoy his company; to it is a kindly-like mark for a foul to love God, on the account of the happiness and holiness that are to be had in him, and from him: love to God shoulders not out all regard and love to ourselves simply, but it shoulders out love to lusts, and all inordinate love to self, and to every idol; nay, it is inconfiftent with true love to God, not to care whether we be happy in the enjoyment of him or not. 2. Confider how, and by what means, and on what terms ye feek to come at that end: are ye fecure, and fenfeless of your fin and misery without God? It is very like, that ye make but a blind bargain, whereof ye will have no real advantage; but, have ye any kindly touch of your fin and mifery, and of your need of a Saviour; and have ye recourse to him, as one "able to fave to the uttermost all that come unto God through him, and who lives for ever to make intercession for them?" Ye may know somewhat of your fincerity in covenanting with God by the way that ye come to him. 3. What use make ye of the Mediator, when we are come to him? Is your peace with God, and your hope of holding by the bargain, grounded on him? Do ve lay the weight of all the good ye expect, on his mediation, on his fatiffaction and interceffion, on his purchase? Do ye hold all through him? That is a good token. 4. Are ye content to give to God, as well as to take from him; to devote yourselves to him for service, as well as to enjoy him and happiness in him? This also is a good

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token, as well as a direction. g. Are ye in much holy fear and jealoufy of backfliding? and is it in your eye and aim purposely to article this with the Lord, "to put his fear in your heart, that we may not depart from him?" Many perfons will fometimes in a warm fit, or in a good mood, (as we use to speak) come far on, as Agrippa did, but quickly fall off, and return to their wonted bias, coldness, and indifferency; therefore, in your covenanting with God, there should be much holy fear, left it be not found; left it hold not: left your foul fay, Now I am absolutely and unreferv. edly given away to God, not by mortgage or wadlet only, (to speak so) but without reversion, even for ever. 6. Ye should come to close actually with God himself in covenant: many come to the word and sacrament, to get, as they think, some good; but come not to the covenant, to be really and perpetually joined to the Lord himself. 7. Ye should seek after some heart-warming, by God's Spirit within you, and fome lively exercise of your faith in him, as ye see to be in this people's case. 8. Persons that are in earnest will be much affected with bygone flips, failings, and unfaithful dealings with God, and are afraid of falling back, and of dealing loofely with the Lord; and this puts them on to be more folicitous and careful, to take on the more bands, and to cast the knot the faster, because the heart is deceitful: "Come, (say they) and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten." The are not content with a covenant, except it be ficker; the heart protests against itself if it shall draw back, and resigns and renounces its liberty to do fo any more, if it may be called liberty. o. A person should aim to have himfelf fure and fatisfied as to this, that he hath really given his confent, that he may have quietness in the affurance of its being fo; yet, not laying the weight of his peace on his clearness and affurance, but because his comfort much depends thereon, therefore he will endeavour to have any blank filled up, and the bufiness

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put to a point: he comes to this govenanting with holy fear, felf-fufficion, and jealoufy, and goeth from it with fear: and as he is attended with this fear in covenanting, to in receiving the facrament, the feal of the covenant; "Come, (fay they) and let us join ourfelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten." O so sure as they would have it! Ye who shall, through grace, come thus, shall find the Lord Jesus waiting, and ready to welcome you.

. But, it is like, ye will ask, How is the facrament made useful and helpful in this joining to the Lord in covenant? I answer in general, as to the believer, That all the promifes are his, and it feals all the bleffings of the covenant to him, because the condition of the covenant is found in him: even as a pardon given to a rebel on condition he lay down his arms, when he doth lay them down and accepts of the pardon, the feal is appended to it, which makes it firm and fure. But what if the persons doubt of their having entered into the covenant? Answer, i. They are either fuch as are mere strangers to God, and have no defire after, nor respect to the covenant; those are under God's curse, and shall get no good of the facrament, because they resolve not to take Christ to fulfil the condition of the covenant in them, and are not in earnest to be under the bond of the covenant : yet, if even such would seriously resolve to fulfil the condition, or rather to take Christ to help them to fulfil it; they should be welcome. Or they are such as are doubting, though they have fome honest defire: such should remember, the bargain is mutual, and they must engage to God, if they would have God engaged to them: and, if we have not done it before, do it even now, and the facrament shall be useful and helpful to you, in these respects: more particularly, 1. For sealing this general truth, " If I believe in Christ, I shall have eternal life:" in which respect it is like a pardon offered to a rebel; on condition he lay down his arms; he would first see it in writ, and then he would have

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it fealed: Well, (faith the king) ye shall get it fealed. 2. It is useful, and hath influence in a moral way, to make you accept of pardon, and to enter in the covenant: in which respect it is an argument, as to allure the rebel to accept of the pardon, to perfuade and affure him, that on his acceptance, he shall have it actually and certainly, when it is holden forth, fealed: for, faith the Lord, in the facrament, ye have my covenant, and here I am ready to feal it. 3. It furthers our joining in covenant, in respect of its clear holding forth and manifesting the bleffings of the covenant. The word faith, that ye are finners, and that ye will get nothing that is truly good but in and through Christ; and that God is content to covenant with you, and to pardon your fins through him; and the facrament brings Christ and the bleshings of the covenant to be some way visible and sensible to you; and the gospel tells how it is done. 4. In the sacrament the Lord condescends in the most formal way to covenant; for in it he faith, Take ye my Son's blood to wash you who are guilty and filthy: and your takis, as it were, a striking of hands with him, and a saying, Content, Lord, let this blood wash me. And thus, looking to the word of institution, which gives footing to faith, and exercising faith thereon as your warrant, your faith is helped to take hold of Christ by and in the facrament. 5. It helps to close with the covenant, by letting you fee the grounds of the covenant, whereon it is bottomed and built. If thou fhouldst fay, Though God would covenant with me, I will not keep: the facrament holds out Christ as cautioner, that hath put himself in our room, and engaged in our name to make us forthcoming. And if thou shouldst yet say, Will God indeed accept of the like of me? It faith, Here is a broken and bleeding Saviour and Mediator to lead thee to God, a Saviour who hath made himself a propitiation for fin: and hereupon the finner may be strengthened to take hold of the covenant, because in the sacrament he sees

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Christ himself laid as a bridge, on which he may come over to God, and his rent sless as the "vail through which he may, as by a new and living way, enter into the holiest."

SERMON XII.

To keep Covenant with God, adhere to him by faith.

On JER. I. 5.

petual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

THERE are two main and mighty uptaking businesses to the people of God; the one whereof is, How to win to be in covenant with God, to be friends and in good terms with him: the other is, How to stand to, and keep covenant with him, and to live as being made friends with him, according to the obligation that lieth on them. This is the great defign of all preaching, to bring them within the covenant, who are without it; and to make those who are within the covemant, to walk fuitably to it: and as these are never separated on the Lord's fide, fo should they never be feparated on our fide; therefore these people are brought in here, faying, " Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a covenant:" and not only fo, but there are two words added by them, to shew their earnest defire to keep and stand to the covenant; the one is, "a perpetual covenant;" the other a covenant " that shall not be forgotten;" the impression whereof may never wear away. And this we conceive to be their meaning, 1. Because to forget the covenant in scripture, is to

deal falfely in it; and to forget the covenant, and to break it, are the same. 2. Because it is (as we take it) opposed to their sear of salse dealing in the covenant; as if they had said, We were once in covenant with God, but we did deal salsely in it, and forget it; let us now therefore "join ourselves in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten:" let it be a constant and standing, a lasting, even an everlasting bargain.

This being the meaning of the words, we shall speak to four observations from them, (the substance whereof ye have heard touched at already,) and these

are,

First, That the great hazard which a people covenanting with God are in, is to stip and slide from their tie and engagements to him, and to forget the covenant.

The second is, That the great evidence of right entering in covenant with God, is to be serious and much concerned in keeping of it, even as much as in entering into it.

The third is, That the great design and duty of a covenanter with God is, never to forget the covenant, but freshly to remember it, so as to be answerable to

it in practice.

The fourth is, That the great mean whereby this design is got prosecuted, and this duty performed, is adhering and cleaving to God, according to the covenant. "Let us (say they) join to the Lord in a conenant." In this respect, adhering to him in it, is the mean to keep covenant, so as we may never fall from it.

The first observation then is, "That the great hazard that a people covenanting with God are in, is to slip and fall from their engagement to him: or, there is such a covenanting with God, as people may soon forget and fall from;" a temporary and unsicker covenanting, that holds not. "A perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten," supposeth that there is a fort of covenanting that slips like a knotless thread, (to

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speak so) and abides not. This is fadly verified in the experience of many common professors of religion, and often even of the godly themselves in a measure: even now there will be a bargaining with God, and within a little they will forget it : Peter faith, "Though all should forfake thee, yet will not I:" and yet within a very little he is found fleeping, and that fame night denies and forfwears his Master. So, Deut. v. the people fay, " All that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do:" and the Lord faith, " They have well faid, O that there were fuch a heart in them!" and yet, within the space of little more than forty days, they fet up a golden calf for their god. So, Pfal. lxxviii. 34, 35, 36, 37. "When he flew them, then they fought him; they returned and inquired early after God: they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High their Redeemer. But they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue; for their hearts were not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant:" they abode not by the mint and effay which they made. But I think this is beyond any need of proof; we rather stand in need to have the impression of it made deep upon our hearts, and to go from the work we have been gone about with holy fear and jealoufy over ourselves, bespeaking ourselves thus, What if this engagement we have come under, hold not, but prove like " the hanging down of the head like a bulrush," for a day? Serious thoughts of this hazard would, through God's bleffing, further the exercise of watchfulness a great deal more. When carnal self-confidence and fearlessness creep on and take hold of us, we, as it were, lay afide our armour, foolishly fancying that there is no hazard, but that all will be well; were there more of this holy fear, there would not be fuch frequent surprises. Have ye not often been surprifed, and proved unftedfast in God's covenant? And, fince ye have so many and clear proofs of the truth of

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this doctrine in your own fad experience, is there not the greater need of holy fear and watchfulness?

The fecond observation is, "That those who are fincere and ferious in covenanting with God, will be no less so, in keeping of, and standing to it." Where people are found and honest at the heart, it will be no less an uptaking work to them, how to keep covenant, than it was to get it entered in : therefore thefe here mentioned have it as one piece of their ferioully uptaking business, how to be joined to the Lord in covenant; and another, how to get it stood to, so as it may be a perpetual one, never to be forgotten. The same reafons that prove that there should be, or that there is ferioufness in making and clothing the covenant, willalso prove that there should be, and will be seriousness in endeavours to keep it; for, if the person honeftly mind, and fincerely defire to be in good termswith God through the covenant, he must, and will endeavour to stand to the terms of the covenant, and breach of covenant will waken a challenge. If it be a principle of true faving grace that puts a person to defire to be under the bond of the covenant, that fame principle will make him defire and endeavour to abide under that bond, and to keep faithfully to him : thus David faith, Pfal. cxix. 29, 30. " I have chosen the way of thy precepts, and I have fluck unto thy teffimonies." There is a choosing of the covenant and testimonies, and a design of sticking to them, when upon choice closed with.

The use of this point serves for instruction. Wouldye sain have a mark of your honesty in covenanting
with God? Here it is, and we know no better mark
or evidence to give you than this, even to be serious
and much concerned in keeping covenant: God will
never account that man to be a true covenanter, that
will cast his law behind his back. The apostle James,
chap. i. speaks of two forts of men that are hearers of
the word; and he compares the one fort, viz. forgetful hearers, to a man, "who, beholding his natural face

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s. 1. in a glass, goes away, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was." But the other fort are fuch. "who are not only hearers, but doers of the word: that man (faith he) shall be blessed in his deeds." It is not the fayer, but the doer and the keeper of the words of the covenent, that is bleffed. As many as feriously engage to God, are put on (as we faid before) with as much feriousness, in endeavouring the performance of their engagement, as to come under it: I speak not of a perfect performance, or fulfilling of engagements without any the least defect, that is not to be win at here; but of ferious minding and endeavouring, in the Lord's strength, the performance of that which we are engaged to: for there is a great difference betwixt men's failing and flipping of infirmity, and their finning with allowance; the former sheweth a body of death to be yet remaining, and may confift with faithfulness in God's covenant; but the latter speaks out a slothful, careless, and negligent undervaluing of God and of his covenant. Let never such a man cloak himself with the pretext of being in covenant with God, nor palliate his palpably gross and voluntary breaches of covenant, with the pretext of infirmity, who doth not feriously drive it as his great defign to be faithful to God's covenant.

Now, would ye know wherein this seriousness in keeping and performing covenant consists? Ye may take it in these characters. The man that is serious in performing his engagement, r. His heart is taken up with it, and there is an ardent longing to be answerable to the covenant that he is entered into with God: his greatest wish in all the world is, as to be in it, so to be faithful in keeping in therefore saith the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" and this is given as a mark of "the blessed man, who is undefiled in the way." And saith he, ver. 6. "Then shall I not be assumed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;" which is a reason of the former, and a confirmation of it;

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he designs to be short in his obedience to no command, and he does not allow himself in his shortcom. ing even as to degree, but is constant in pursuing his defign always, even unto the end. 2. Seriousness in performing appeareth by kindly acknowledging the impression of the weightiness of the tie and obligation that the covenant lays on persons; it someway affects and burdens them, fo that they walk not fo lightly as others do under the obligation and debt of the covenant, though it be a friendly debt, and also a privilege. Their burden is not, that they are under the obligation, but how to get it performed; thus faith the Pfalmist, Psal. Ivi. 12. "Thy vows are upon me, O God." They take on vows to God, and keep them on, and walk as being under them. This is a main thing tobe looked to in keeping covenant. 3. This ferioufness in performing appears in the fear that perfons have of going wrong and miscarrying: they are afraid to break to God; neither are any fo fuspicious of them as they are of themselves, knowing by sad experience, that their " hearts are deceitful above all things:" and this is a very native evidence, confidering what we heard of our fickleness, which cannot be without the impression of fear. 4. It appears in a holy carefulness and diligence to prevent that which they fear: lest at any time they let a buckle slip, (to speak so) and lest that which they feared come on them, their fear puts them to diligence to prevent the thing feared. This makes them to fast and pray, and to be watchful over themselves in loose and untender company, and to eschew them as far as they can, and to hazard some loss, rather than to put themselves un-der a mare; watching and praying, lest they fall into the fin of dealing falfely in God's covenant. c. It appears in the sharpness of challenges, when any thing milcarries in their hands. They are foon challenged for the very beginnings of a breach; a wrong look will affect them: therefore faith Job, chap. xxxi. " F have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should

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I look upon a maid?" And the heart, while tender, will loath and fcar at the least thing that hath the remotelt tendency towards a breach, were it but the appearance of evil. Any the least guilt foon toucheth and fmiteth them, not only that which is their own, but even that of others; thus good Ezra faith, chap. ix, "Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations." And he lieth in the dust before God mourning, becanse of this. 6. It appears in respect of the exercise of a person's faith; as it is an uptaking work and business to honest souls, to get their faith founded rightly in clofing the covenant with God, that they be well grounded in believing; fo it is no less an uptaking and exercifing work, to be improving their faith on God's promifes, to make them forthcoming, according to their engagement, and for keeping covenant: which is the apostle's exercise, Gal. ii. 20. to " live by faith on the Son of God: I am (faith he) crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by faith on the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And, try it who will, they shall find it to be an uptaking work, rightly to exercise faith for entertaining of spiritual life, and for preventing a covenant-breach with God. It may be, for as many professed covenanters as are here, that but few of you know much, if any thing at all, what it is tobe taken up with being answerable to the covenant according to your engagements: this, no doubt, makes much unfound work, that ye do not fingly and ferioully defign this; that ye reach not forward, that ye bear not down the body, and bring it under subjection, left ye come fhort-here. If ye were fuitably lerious, these characters and evidences might be as so many directions to you: there would be much watchfulness in doing; ready entertaining of challenges and convictions; much heart-melting under the fenfe of wrongs done to God; and the very appearance of evil

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would be scared at, and appear terrible. There is an evil readily incident to many professors of religion, that they would fain be at marks of a good spiritual state, and of being in covenant with God, but such as would not diffurb their carnal confidence, cafe, and laziness, nor put them on to painful diligence: but we have no fuch marks to give; neither dare we, for the fear of God, and because of the hazard of souls, affign fuch; there being none fuch given or affigned in the word of God: nay, let me tell you, that, if there be not painful diligence and faithfulness in keeping covenant with God, it will darken the light of any other mark that can be given; and, no doubt, it is this negligence and unfaithfulness that makes many good marks, clear in themselves, dark to many Christians, while they give not diligence to make their calling and election fure, and give not diligence to add one grace to another, and one degree of grace to another: it is also the cause of uncomfortable walking, yea, of uncomfortable communicating. But to be fincere and ferious in owning our covenanting-engagements, and faithfully forthcoming in the fruits thereof, and in a correspondent conversation, is a mark that will give comfort, and fome quietness at least, till comfort come; the Lord will comfortably confess fuch as faithfully confess him.

The third observation is, "That it is, and will be the great study of persons really entered in covenant with God, to have it an abiding bargain, a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten:" This is their design, as well as their duty, that their practice and walk may be suitable to the covenant. And it being the main thing implied in the words, and that which we intend to insist on, I shall, in the prosecution of it, speak a little to these three. 1. To what it is to aim to have God's covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten. 2. To the reasons and the ground that there is to press this. And, 3. To some motives and encouragements

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For the first, viz. What it is to study to have God's covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten. We take it up in these particulars: 1. That those entered in covenant should drive the great design of the covenant; which is fummed up in these two words, To have God to be ours, and ourselves to be God's: it is even that which we have in answer to the first queltion of our excellent catechism, "What is man's chief end? To enjoy God, and to glorify him:" to enjoy him as our own God, and to glorify him, by acknowledging ourselves to be his, and by devoting ourselves to his service, as being a people " formed for himself, to shew forth his praise." This should be vigorously driven, as the great design of the covenanter with God; and it would be a notable help to keep covenant, even to live and walk fo as we may have God's company: for what use serves God's covenant unto us, and our entering therein, if we continue as great strangers to him as before? If this be not driven as our defign, we forget wherefore we covenanted. 2. There should be a minding of our obligation in the covenant, as the condition or mean by which the end, viz. the enjoying of God, is come at; which is, in a word, to be his, to walk before him, as he willeth Abraham to do, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect:" God himself is that which the covenanter should principally aim at; and walking before him is the mean appointed for the coming at that end. in short, whatever the covenant faith in reference to our duty, as to abandon lufts, to be "holy in all manner of convertation," to be "watchful, to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his," &c. is that which we are tied to in the covenant, and which we should seriously drive at as our great design. 3. There should be a minding and remembering God's engagement to us in the covenant, which is a part of it, as well as our engagement to him, and never to be forgotten by us : " Return, (faith the Lord, Jer. iii.) backfliding children, and I will heal your backflidings: re-

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turn, for I am married to you: I will be your God and guide, even unto death: I will never leave thee nor forfake thee," &c. And this minding and remembering of God's part of the covenant is a crediting of his promise. Many believers mind and rementber their own part of the covenant, but forget that God is tied to them; (which is to remember, not a mutual engagement, fuch as the covenant bears out, but only our own particular engagement;) which makes us have fo many failings on our fide, and doth very much weaken our hands in duty; because we lay not the weight of our performances on God that hath promised, " who is faithful, and will also do it." We will find it to be frequent and familiar to the faints mentioned in scripture, to mind God's part of the covenant as well as their own, and particularly to David, in the book of Pfalms, who faith, "Thou hast made a covenant with thine Anointed: thou hast laid help upon One that is mighty: Art thou not from everlafting our God? Lord, remember thy covenant:" that is, the covenant that God hath made with his people; and often elsewhere. The greater weight of a believer's life and confolation lies here. Alas! what would our life or our engagement be, and what would our comfort and hope be, without his engagement to us in the covenant? And if this be not fuitably minded and remembered, it will prove but a very heartless bargain. 4. It implies this, feriously to endeavour to conform our practice to the many great obligations that we lie under to him, and which God's offer and covenant do on many accounts call us to. This is a fhort hint of what it is to "keep and do the covenant of God, and to perform it alway, even unto the end, to have his covenant perpetual, and never to be forgotten."

As for the second, to wit, the grounds and reasons of this, and whereby it may be pressed: 1st, We should think of, and believe the reality of God's covenant, the reality of the promises in it, and of all that

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is spoken of it: and should put ourselves to it, if indeed we look on it as fuch. The truth is, it is the language of our unbelief, that we scarcely think God to be in earnest; as if all that is spoken of this covenant were but a cunningly-devised fable: if we really believed, that by this bleffed covenant we may be brought to enjoy God, and to be made conform to his image in holinefs, to have our vile bodies at last made conform to his glorious body, &c. and that as certainly we shall be possessed of such great and glorious privileges by keeping this covenant, as we are certain that this world is yet standing; such a faith would prove to us "the evidence of things not feen, and the substance of things hoped for;" and would be a notable incitement and sharp spur to holy activity in, and to quick dispatch of called-for duty. O but it be a good and real bargain, and will have wonderful following to all that keep it! and whether this be now believed or not, it will be found a little hence, that this bargain was one of the best that ever was heard tell of in the world. 2dly, We should seriously bethink ourfelves what will come of it, in case there be grossly unfaithful dealing and unstedfastness in God's covenant. I shall only name these five things that will follow on it. 1. Much fin. 2. Much shame. 3. Much reflection on God. 4. Much wrath. And, 5. Much want of peace, and much anxiety in the confcience that is guilty of this fin. (1.) I fay, much fin. Better there had never been a covenant in your offer, and that we had never professed your entering into covenant with God: " It is better (faith the wife man, Eccl. v. (.) not to vow to God, than to vow and not to perform." It had been better that many of you had been crushed in your mother's belly, or that ye had been born Turks and Pagans, and had lived and died fo, than to be found among them that deal falfely in God's covenant; the groffest fins of Pagans are in fome respect as no fins in comparison of this, John xv. 22. (2.) There will be much shame before God,

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even fhame and confusion of face, everlatting shame, They " shall rife from the dead to shame and everlast. ing contempt," Dan. xii. Sinners will have much shame, ere all be done for every fin: but such as have wickedly betrayed their trust to God, and, after they had made profession of entering in covenant with him, bave dealt perfidiously and falsely in it, will be in a manner hiffed at amongst devils and reprobate Pagans. who never had fuch offers, neither made fuch profesfions; and their condemnation will be acknowledged to carry eminent and conspinuous desert in it; because fuch had a good bargain, and deal treacherously with God, and quite marred it to themselves: they have often also much shame amongst men even here; " The man (faith Christ) that hears my fayings, and does them not, is like unto a foolish builder, that built his house upon the sand." And elsewhere he resembles rash engagers in professed covenanting with him, to men who fit not down to count the cost, that begin to build, and, not being able to finish, expose themfelves to the mocking, fcorn, and derifion of all that pass by: such and such a man (will some be ready to fav) was a great professor; but now, behold what is become of him; take him up yonder; he feemed once to have some tenderness, but now he is quite turned afide, and become gross and loose. Men of any moral honesty and ingenuity will be ashamed to break their word, and to violate their engagements one to another in worldly matters; how much greater fliame is it to break to God, and to deal falfely in his covenant? (3.) It hath deep reflections upon God; for the covenant-breaker faith on the matter, that it repents him that ever he made it, for he hath never gotten good of it; and that God hath not been faithful in keeping to him, and therefore he thought himfelf loofed from all its obligation. Now, will any of you dare to fay, that the covenant is not a good bargain, or that God is not a good, responsible, and faithful party to deal with? "What iniquity have your

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fathers found in me, (faith the Lord to his professing people, Jer. ii.) that they are gone so far from me? Come (faith he, Micah vi.) before the mountains, and let the hills hear my controverfy with you; what iniquity have ye found in me? wherein have I wearied you? testify against me." Sure, all that depart from God, rub reproach on God's covenant as a bad bargain, and on God as a bad and unfaithful party to deal with: O high and horrid practical atheism and blasphemy! Doubtless such will find that they have played the fools egregiously, in "committing these two great evils, in forfaking God the fountain of living waters, and in digging to themselves cisterns, even broken cisterns that can hold no water." O if ye could imagine what ye will think of it ere long, when ye will not get a drop of water to cool your tongue, because ye said by your practice, that God was not worth the having, and " to the Almighty, Depart from us, we will have none of thee, neither will we have the knowledge of thy ways!" (4.) Much want of peace, and much anxiety will follow upon it: Even the penitent and covenanting people of God, Jer. iii. 20, 21. have much bitterness on this account of treacherous dealing in God's covenant: " A voice of weeping and lamentation is heard on the mountains, the children of Israel saying. We have perverted our way, we have forfaken the Lord our God." How much more bitterness of another nature, how much more Imart, vexation, anguish, agony, and gnawing of conscience shall impenitent sinners have, on account of their false and perfidious dealing in God's covenant? This will make the hearts of many to quake and tremble for terror. If ye get repentance, it will be a heart-break to you; and, if ye get not repentance, much heartless heart-breaking and crushing is abiding you in the end for evermore: and, O what trembling of heart, failing of eyes, and forrow of mind may be betwixt and that! (5.) Much wrath will follow on it in the day of the Lord, if it be continued in: and

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judge ye within yourselves if there be so many aggravations of, or so many threatenings against any sin, as of and against unfaithful and false dealing in God's tovenant; this sin hath made the Jews to lie, these sixteen hundred years and above, scattered among all nations, as a curse: therefore make it your great design and business now, to be faithful to God, and to have the covenant with him "a perpetual covenant,

never to be forgotten."

As for the third, viz. Some motives and encourage. ments to excite you to be faithful in God's covenant, and to fludy to have it " a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten," confider, in the oft place, that it is a fingularly good and nonfuch bargain to them that keep covenant, there is no bargain more lovely to them that keep touches with God: " It is (faith dying David, 2 Sam. xxiii.) all my falvation, and all my defire:" it hath all things in it that my heart can with. We make a pitiful and poor life to ourselves, through our undervaluing God's covenant; the believer, by improving of it, might have (as we use to speak) a lord's life, yea, a king's life, yea, a life infinitely preferable to the life of all the great men and monarchs on earth: " Having all things, though possessing nothing," as it is, 2 Cor. vi. 10. And faith the apoltle, Philip. iv. " I have all, I abound and have no lack;" while, in the mean time, he was living on a little charity from others. We might have a good life here and hereafter. Doth it not exceedingly commend God's covenant, that neither fickness, poverty, reproach, contempt, perfecution, nor death itself, though violent and bloody, can mar this excellent life? When the covenancer comes to judgment, "Who can lay any thing to his charge? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn him?" He hath a friend before him, " Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," and is in good covenant with God. The great advantage of it in this life, and in that which is to come, (" for godliness is great gain, having the promise of both,") may

abundantly commend the covenant, and faithfulness in it. I am persuaded, there is no suiter or wooer, to court and put in for the finner's heart and affection. that can possibly out-bid God's covenant: can the " lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life?" can profit, pleasure, or preferment make such proffers? Is there such advantage to be had in serving them, as there is to be had in ferving God? By the one, ye "bring forth fruit unto holiness, and in the end roap eternal life:" but, by the other, ye " fow to the flesh, and shall of the flesh reap corruption," a poor and hungry harvest. 2dly, The very keeping of covenant with God, is in itself an advantage. It hath a great reward in the bosom of it; for it puts the person to love God, to delight in him, to place its happiness in him, to study holiness and mortification of fin; and is there not great advantage in these? Can ye think or fay, that there is any prejudice in thefe, and fuch things as thefe, namely, to be blameless in your conversation, to be fincere and not a hypocrite, to be ferious and not lukewarm? I am perfuaded, that, if ve will but put it seriously to your own consciences, ye will be forced to fay, that fincerity in religion is better than hypocrify; and stedfastness in God's covenant, than treachery: and what more do we call for? And therefore let me, on this ground, and as ye would not come in tops with your own consciences, befeech you to study faithfulness in the covenant. God's covenant hath a great advantage of the hearers of it, and of professed engagers in it, even a friend in their bosoms, viz. conscience, that will side with it, and fay that it was a good bargain, that the terms were very reasonable, and that no prejudice could come by it, but unspeakably much advantage; and will tell the man, that it would have been his bonour, and for his profit, to have kept it, and to have been faithful in it: why then, will the Lord fay, didft thou deal falfely in it, and renounce it? The wretched man's conscience will answer, that there was no shadow of reason for it,

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it was plainly folly and madness; for to "keep and do God's covenant and commandment, is people's wisdom before all nations," Deut. iv. It is a sad matter, that when men may have that which is infinitely preferable to what they are fo eagerly in feeking after, even true riches, pleafure, and honour, peace that passeth all natural understanding, joy unspeakable and full of glory, and every good thing, by covenanting with God, and by faithful dealing therein; that they should not drive this as their great defign, and make it their great work and uptaking business: "O that there were fuch an heart in them (faith the Lord, Deut. v.), that they might fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Men are ready to fay, We must provide for our families, and, under that fpecious pretext, they shift this main work; but, ah, fools that they are! there is no way comparable to this, to provide for families and children, even to have themselves and their children entered into God's covenant, and made to deal faithfully in it! This engageth him to provide for and become tutor unto the man's children: and is there not great encouragement here, to have every good thing bestowed, and all carking care and anxiety concerning ourselves and children removed? 3dly, We should consider, that God is a fingular good party to deal with, very tender of them that aim to deal honestly with him : he is indeed severe and terrible, when he becomes the avenger of a broken covenant; but he is most tender towards honest engagers, who fincerely endeavour to keep touches with him; he is no rigid interpreter of their actions, but is ready to put the best sense on them that they are capable of: "Like as a father (faith the Pfalmist, Pfal. cii.) pitieth his children, fo doth the Lord pity them that fear him." He is a Father that will take little off the hand of his children, when he knows them to have a will to his work, when he will not deal fo with others: " All his ways are

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mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant and his testimonies." It is not meant of such as keep it perfectly, for fo they needed not mercy; but of them that honeftly defign and endeavour to keep it: and, may not that encourage to be faithful in God's covenant, that he is so easy to please? 4thly, Consider, that he hath graciously stuffed his covenant with promises meet for the through-bearing of them that would fain keep covenant. If it be an evil heart that will not love God, which troubles them, the promise is, "I will circumcife their hearts, and the hearts of their feed, to love the Lord their God:" whereas no others, who are without the covenant, or deal unfaithfully in it, can expect the performance of any fuch promife: if it be a backfliding heart, the promife is, Jer. iii, 22. "I will heal your backflidings." If it be the fear of departing from God that troubles them, the promife is, Jer. xxxii. 40. " I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me." If it be the dominion of fin that they fear, the promife is, Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" that is, under the covenant of grace: and, if it be fear of the prevailing of Satan's temptations that troubles them, the promife is, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." May we not then take heart to be faithful in this covenant? Yea, he hath also condescended to come under this engagement too, even to make us forthcoming in the covenant; "I will call (faith the Pfalmist, Pfal Ivii.) upon the Lord, who performeth all things for me." It might have been faid to David, How wift thou get all done that thou haft undertaken? He answers, "I will call upon him who performeth all things for me;" and fo I will get them all done and performed, fo as I may hope to be accepted on the Mediator's account, and for his fake. 5thly, Confider the Mediator of the covenant is furety and cautioner, not only for believers debt, but also for their duty; therefore he is called,

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Heb. vii. " the Surety of this better covenant:" and, when Christ and we are engaged in one bond, there - is ground for us to expect that fomething will be got done; though the principle debtor be not much worth, yet the Cautioner is worthy and infinitely responsible. 6thly, Confider, that there are already many who have passed through the troublesome sea of this world, and have been marvelloufly helped; and, it is but a little, and all you honest engagers to the Lord will be through the same sea, and fairly set on land ; your warfare ere long will be at an end, the prize will be got without any more fighting: What is your fighting, fighing, and walking heavily, clothed as it were in mourning for a little time? It is but for a few years, and it may be to some of you not so long; and, within a little space, " the day of refreshing from the presence of the Lord will come;" a relieving of you from your post, a loofing of you from your bonds, a final discharge from your warfare will come; " and a new fong will be put in your mouths, and palms in your hands." O but faithful dealing with God in the covenant will have a heartfome out-gate! When ye shall come ashore, " all tears shall be wiped from your eyes, and forrow and fighing shall flee away;" and ye shall meet with that word, O warm word! "Come, ye faithful fervants, enter into the joy of your Lord." Ye shall not always fight and wreftle, neither will ve be always tempted and troubled; rest and repose is coming, it is even at hand: then one ray of his countenance will be infinitely more heartforme, refreshing, and satisfying, than all these things that ye are now called to abandon and part with, can possibly amount to; Christ's first welcome to his Father's house will eternally banish the remembrance of all the fad things that ye met with in this world.

The fourth and last observation is, "That the great mean of securing a covenanter, and making him stedfast, is faith exercised on God, or adhering to him by faith, by virtue of this covenant." It is not, to lay weight on, or trust to our own strength; but, seeing God hath made a promise of through-bearing, to undertake the duties that we are called to in his strength, trusting to his faithfulness, and to his furnishing of us according to the covenant: as, when poor finners are fummoned to appear before God, and they have no righteousness of their own, they are to step forward, trusting to Christ's righteousness; so when they are called to duty, and have no strength of their own to enable them to a fuitable discharge thereof, they are to confider " that God is faithful, who hath promised, and who will also do it." And indeed believers have found in their comfortable experience, that, when they have adventured to duty with a believing look to God's covenanted strength, they have found it go fweetly and furprifingly well with them; thus it is faid of those worthies mentioned, Heb. xi. that "through faith they wrought righteoufness," as well as they did all other things thereby. This also is it which the Lord inculcateth, John xv. " Abide in me, (faith he) and ye shall bring forth much fruit: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing:" Where it is clear, that it is not enough that we be in Christ, but that we must abide in him, and have continual dependence on him for the influences of life and strength derived from: him.

Ye then that would be faithful in God's covenant, and would have it "perpetual, never to be forgotten," must especially make use of this mean. Make conscience of all other appointed means: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:" But see that ye neglect not this mean; which if ye do, "the watchmen will watch in vain:" and your grip or hold will be unsicker, if ye make not use of him to make it sure, and to keep it so. And therefore, I. Mind seriously and constantly what ye are, in and of yourselves, even sickle, feckles, weak, feeble, and unconselves.

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flant creatures, not daring to undertake any thing in your own strength. 2. Remember what God is; and that ye have a worthy, able, and responsible Cautioner. 3. Remember that we are engaged in a " covenant never to be forgotten:" forgetting is the first rife of unfaithfulness. 4 Remember the promises that God hath made for your through-bearing, and let faith be evercifed on them: join with diligence and watchfulness, a fuitable exercise of faith. c. Take a serious look, every day when ye go to pray, of your resolutions and engagements; renew them frequently and feriously in his own strength, and be casting the other knot; and put the heart diffinctly to fay, This was my bargain, and I will, through grace, abide by it; and then go and pray over it, that we may be made faithful in your thus covenanting with God, that ye may be enabled to pay your vows, and make your honest resolutions practicable; levelling at this as your scope and defign in all duties: I have faid fuch a thing, and have not kept my word; Lord, forgive it for Christ's fake: I am engaged in this, and that, and the other duty; Lord, help me to perform. And, for your furtherance in humiliation and foft walking before God, look on all your fins as aggravated by this unfaithful and treacherous dealing in God's covenant; and on all duties, as those which your covenant with God binds you to depend on him for strength to be communicated to you according to the covenant, for going about them fuitably and acceptably: and within a little while ye shall get a fair pass to be gone, and a full discharge of all that ye were trusted with, according to the covenant. And the Lord help you to be faithful, fo that it may be betwixt God and you in very deed " a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten."

SERMON XIII.

A SERMON Preached immediately before the Com-

On MAT. XXVI. 28, 29.

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

ALTHOUGH we had no more to do at our meeting together in this place to-day, but to read and hear these same wonderful words, if our hearts were in a fuitable frame, knowing and confidering what we are about and doing, we would be in a divine rapture and transport of admiration at his love, and kindled into a flame of holy zeal for his glory, by them. O what fweet and happy words are thefe from our dying Lord Jesus Christ's mouth! " Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things the Lord hath prepared for them that wait for him." And indeed there is a fum of them in these words, they being a compend of the testament and legacy which our Lord hath left to his friends. O finners, be of good cheer, there are good news and glad tidings of great joy here: here is the new covenant and all that is in it, and remission of fins in particular, as the legacy: here is Christ, which maketh this covenant favoury; and it is confirmed by his death who is the Testator thereof; which

makes it fure: here is heaven and eternal glory; and what would you have more? "This is (faith he) my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of the fins of many:" which holds forth the pròmifes, and the convey of them; the legacy, and how it comes to us. "I will not (faith he) drink of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom:" there is heaven, the heartfome upfhot of all. Remission of fins come to finners covenant-wife, through Christ's blood; and by closing with Christ, and making application of this blood, finners come to get remission of fins, and all the benefits of the covenant; and are brought at last to drink the new wine of heaven, and to drink it new with Christ, even to share in his glory, to have one feast and glory with him. And truly, if there were no more to be faid, we may more confidently fay, that these are wonderful glad tidings, which our bleffed Lord Jesus hath left to be the great subject of the doctrine of the gospel, and the scope of the sacraments.

We shall, 1. Open up the words a little. 2. We shall draw some doctrines from them. And then, 3.

Infift in the application.

First then, for explication. From the 26th verse is fet down the institution of the supper of the Lord; wherein we have, 1. What Christ did. 2. What he commands the disciples, and us in them, to do. 3. He explicates, in these words, what he hath been doing, and commanded to be done: " This is my blood (faith he) of the new testament," &c. as if he had faid, Would you know what it is that I am doing? There was a covenant made long fince betwixt my Father and me, concerning the elect; wherein I condescended and transacted to take on man's nature, and in that nature to fuffer and fatisfy Divines Justice for their fins: and this is the commemoration of my fatisfaction, according to that covenant, and the exhibiting and giving to you a confirmation of your interest in all the bleffings of that covenant, whereof remission of

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fins is one, and a main one. He needeth, as would feem, to have faid no more, but that he was going to fuffer, and to fuffer for this cause, even to purchase redemption to finners: but he will further thew his disciples, and in them all believers in him, that this came not to pass by guess, but according to an old covenant and eternal transaction that passed betwixt Jehovah and him; and fo adds the facrament to be a commemoration, and a more full confirmation thereof to believers, of all that is purchased by it, and promiled in it. In the 20th verse, he hath two words further, one of warning, another of encouragement: 1. One of warning, " I fay unto you, Henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine:" as if he had faid, Take heed what ye are doing, make this communion very welcome, and let it confirm and strengthen you against the trials that are conting; for I will, have no more communions with you after this manner in this world, 2. A word of encouragement and consolation: because they might think and say, Alas! Lord, what will become of us, if we shall have no more communions with thee? Be not (faith he to them on the matter) discouraged; we shall yet have more and more intimate communion than ever we had here on earth: there is a day coming, when we shall have a fweet communion in the kingdom of heaven together, when we shall drink it it new, when we shall have the thing fignified, even communion without the intervention of ordinances, in the full harvest of joy in God, in his kingdom. Then, ver. 20, as if he were going to a triumph, he and they fung a hymn or pfalm; partly thereby to teach us to be cheerful, and partly to flew that finging of pfalms is not unfuitable for this action.

To make the former words, and what we are to fay on them, a little more clear, we would in this facrament, which here the Lord explicates, confider three or four things. First, Christ's offer: wherein there are two things, viz. the outward and visible signs, the

elements; and the inward visible things fignified by them, which is Christ's body and blood. In the offer then, in fhort, we have not only the element or fign. but the thing fignified and represented by it: even as in the word of the gospel, there are these two, viz. so many words made up of letters in fyllables, and the matter contained in them. Secondly, Confider the receiving of Christ's offer, wherein there are two things, r. The act of receiving the elements by the hand: 2. The heart's receiving what is offered in and by the elements: even as, in hearing the word, there is the giving or lending of the ear to the voice of words, that they may be understandingly heard, and there is the receiving what is spoken, by faith in the heart. As Christ holds forth both in his offer, so the believer would both ways receive; by the hand the element should be received, and by faith the thing fignified should be received. Thirdly, Ye should confider this application of the thing fignified, in a twofold respect. 1. As it holds out the entering of us into the covenant, in order to the receiving of the pardon of fin, when the facrament is confidered complexly with the word: 2. As it applieth Christ and the benefits that come by him for our consolation. Christ is to be received in the former respect, before he can be received in the latter; we must needs receive Christ in his offer, ere we can receive any benefit that comes by him: therefore the word goes along with the facrament, that we may get a grip and catch-hold of Christ by the covenant; for they that are without the covenant are without Christ, and all faving benefit by him; but where Christ is received, and faith closed with him as he is offered, the foul may warrantably make application of him, not only for pardon of fin, the particular benefit here expressly mentioned, but for all the other benefits of the covenant; whereas they who have not faith, have nothing, and receive nothing: but are deeply guilty through their not receiving, but rather rejecting and despising of Christ

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and his benefits. Fourthly, Ye should confider this facrament as it feals directly our warrant to receive Christ and his benefits, or as it feals our application of Christ and his benefits; for it may be useful for both, and is actually fo to believers. In the first respect, we offer to you a good fecurity for your falvation, on condition of your receiving Christ; but, in the second respect, the security is sealed simply, as having God's feat appended to it, to all who have received him. Thus the tree of life was a feal of the covenant of life by works to Adam, if he stood; but it was not a confirmation that he should have life by the covenant, except he fulfilled that which was called for in it. So circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Ishmael and other visible church-members, as well as to Ifage, in the first fense; that is, that the security was good; but to Isaac, and believers, it was not only a feal or a confirmation that the fecurity was good, and fufficient in itself, but a seal of confirmation that it should be good to them: therefore, in coming to partake of the facrament, we should permit alway our clofing with Christ; and then we have not only God's word and oath, but also the facrament, for his seal of confirmation of the covenant. In a word, Christ doth offer here to all a pledge that he will make good the covenant; and it is the great guilt of many professors of the gospel, that they close not with him in his offer, so as to make use of it: which makes them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; which they neither would nor could be guilty of, if this were not in their offer. But it is more to believers who have by faith closed with Christ; this seal of the covenant accreues to their fecurity, who have taken God's word, and rested on it: the believer, then, is not only sure in this respect, that he hath a good warrant to trust and lean to, that is a fealed covenant; but also, that it will not fail him in particular: fo that he may lay, "I know in whom I have believed." And and we should not divide these things that God hath so wisely

and well conjoined, viz. clofing with Christ and the covenant in the right way, according to the terms thereof, and taking this feal of confirmation of it.

. Now, in the fecond place, I come to give you a little view and thort feries of the gospel, in several observations from the words; that we may haste to that which we more particularly aim at, to wit, the use of all.

First then, observe, "That all men and women, even the elect not excepted, are finful, and as fuch considered before God;" so it is said, Isa. liii. 6. " All we like sheep have gone astray." This is the object of the gospel, finners; the persons for whose behoof Christ hath made his testament, and to whom he hath left his legacies, are finners, even finful men and women; and, the more fin be in them, the more grace thines in God's choosing of fuch, and in Christ's dying for fuch, and not choosing nor dying for fallen angels: it is finners, I fay, who are the object of Christ's testament.

Secondly, Observe, "That there is a grand defign laid by God from eternity for the faving of many finners, and for procuring to them remission of fins, the fruit of the ancient counsel of the bleffed and glorious Trinity." And this is it which Christ aims at in all his ordinances, to get finners pardoned, and freed from the curfe due to them for fin, reconciled, justified, fanctified, and brought to drink the new wine of heaven. This is laid down by Jehovah, as the basis and foundation whereon he hath reared up a magnificent and glorious superstructure of the riches of his most fovereignly free grace, for making it to shine forth confpicuously and radiently throughout all ages.

Thirdly, Observe, "That there is a covenant wellordered, fuited, and fitted to promote this great and glorious end and defign of faving finners:" A covenant fo contrived, as it may well fuit the faving of finners, and procure unto them the remission of fins. There is a transaction betwixt God and the Mediator;

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a Surety and Cautioner is provided to take on the debt of the elect, and to fatisfy justice to the full for all their fins: and this is one article of the covenant, that the Mediator should undertake thy debt, O believer, and fatisfy for it: " He was (faith Ifaiah, chap. hii.) wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on him, and by his stripes we are healed."

Fourthly, Observe, " That according to this covenant and transaction, our bleffed Lord Jesus hath really, actually, and fully fatisfied for the fins of believers, according to his undertaking:" So that, as in the counsel of God, that great trust was put on him, and he undertook the work of finners redemption; so, now it is, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do:" the covenant is exactly fulfilled on my part, not one article of it is unfulfilled; all that was committed to me is now fully performed hence it was his last words on the cross, "It is finished."

Fifthly, Observe, "That by the application of the blood of Jesus, through a finner's closing with him, and interesting himself in him, he may and doth obtain remission of sins, and partake of the benefit of redemption purchased by his blood, even of all the benefits of the covenant." Therefore, when he hath faid, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of the sins of many;" he turns over the words to them, and tells them, that "they shall drink the fruit of this vine new with him in his Father's kingdom." As it was made fure, that Adam was to have life, on the condition of perfect obedience; fo it is as fure to a finner, taking with his fin, and betaking himself to, and closing with Christ and his fatisfaction, that he shall have pardon of sin, and all the benefits of this covenant, even to eternal glory, fecured to him.

Sixthly, Observe, "That as our blessed Lord Jesus Christ hath purchased this redemption and remission, to he is most willing, desirous, and pressing, that finners, to whom the gospel is offered, should make use of his righteousness, and of the purchase made thereby, for this end, that they may have remission of sins, and eternal life." For not only is the security good, sufficient, and sure in itself, the testament being confirmed; but he is (to speak so with reverence) passionately desirous that sinners should endeavour on good ground to be sure of it in themselves; therefore he kindly puts it in a legacy, makes serious offer of it, and strongly confirms it to all that embrace it.

Seventhly, Observe, "That it is to testify this his willingness that sunners should make use of his purchase, and lay hold on his righteousness, on remission of sins and life through him, and to promote the acceptance thereof among sunners, that he hath instituted this ordinance of the communion." "Take ye, eat ye," &c. For this is (as if he had said) the end of the institution of this sacrament, and the reason of it, even to be a sign and seal of confirmation to many of the remission of sins, through my blood: this was my design in laying down my life, to get many sunners pardoned; and this is the end of the institution of this precious ordinance of my supper, to apply it to them, and to confirm them in the faith of it.

Eighthly, Observe, "That they who would partake aright of this sacrament for their confirmation as to the pardon of their sins, and their sharing in the rest of the benefits of Christ's purchase, would first close with Christ in the covenant, and make that the way of their making use of this sacrament to confirm the bargain: "Therefore it is called the cup of the new covenant in his blood." This is the sine qua non, even closing with Christ in the covenant; else the sacrament can do no good: it is the great thing that admits sinners to have right and access to Christ's purchase; the writing must first be subscribed, and then sealed; the bargain made, and then confirmed.

Ninthly, Observe, "That they who have the offer of the gospel, and are admitted to the lacrament of the

Lord's fupper, should be so prefent, serious, and every way in a posture suitable to that action, as if they were never to have the offer or occasion of another communion." As the Lord faith to Elijah the prophet, " Arife, eat, for thou halt a long journey to go;" fo faith the Lord to the disciples, and in them to us, " Henceforth I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father:" Ye will get no more communions with me here, and therefore go rightly about this; improve it well, and let a foundation be laid here of a folid standing interest in me, that ye may be ready to meet with the trials that are coming.

Tenthly, Observe, " That sinners who receive Jefus Christ on the terms he is offered in the gospel, and take the facrament for a confirmation of their interest in him and in his purchase, though they should never have another communion in this world, may confidently expect a joyful one in heaven." I tell you (faith he) for your consolation, Though I drink no more of the fruit of the vine with you here, yet the time cometh, when ye and I shall drink it new in the kingdom of my Father.

Eleventhly, Observe, "That honest communicants, fensible of fin, and content to take Christ on his own terms, are called to be cheerful, and to cheer themfelves in the lively hope and expectation of heaven." And a believer, though a finner, that takes this way, should take his communion as a feal and pledge, confirming him in the faith and hope of his being ere long to have an eternal and uninterrupted communion with Christ in glory.

In these observations we have a short hint of the treafure that believers have in Christ; and from them ye may gather, what a full Christ, a full covenant, and good bargain ye have, who have really closed with with: ye have a more liberal and richly bountiful Mediator, who hath put all these great things, and many more into his testament to finners, offered to them in the gospel, and sealed in the facrament of his supper,

to all them that take him, and rest satisfied with him; for which satisfaction there is all the reason in

the world.

And therefore, to come, in particular application, to the use of all: there is here good and large ground to speak a little to these three. 1. To bring forth to you the good news of falvation through Christ. 2. To exhort and preis you to embrace and accept of them with gladness of heart, to make welcome "this faithful faying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to feve finners." 2. To comfort and felace finners that have betaken themselves to Christ in the abundant confolation of this covenant, and in the administration of it, and in the Mediator, the great subject and substance of it. And seeing it may be well faid here, "Who is sufficient for these things?" ye should have an eye to him, who can make this gofpel to favour fweetly, and even triumph. The commission to preach it is his; the ordinance and institution is his; and if there be any appetite for your food amongst you, any fense of fin, and defire of communion with him in heaven hereafter, look, O look up to him, and befeech him to breathe on his own ordinance, and to back this word with life and power.

The first use then serves to bring forth to you shis day the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. O sinners, by this gospel and testament of Christ, and by the administration of this ordinance, we have good news to tell you; "This is the new testament in his blood, which is shed for the remission of the sins of many." I shall endeavour to hold forth to you the goodness and gladness of these news and tidings, in these three: and would to God we had sensible sinners to believe, receive, and welcome them! 1. That there is a good bargain through Christ to be gotten by sinners. 2. That sinners, by accepting of Christ, have sufficient warrant and good security for applying to themselves and making use of this good bargain. 3. That Christ

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is most willing and desirous that sinners should close with this bargain, and make use of him and his righteoulness for attaining the pardon of fin, and for mak-

ing themselves happy everlastingly.

For the first : Sinners, here is a good bargain to you through Christ, glad tidings of great happiness: " Fear not, (faid the angel to the thepherds, Luke ii. 10, 11.) behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Yea, we have these good news to preach today, Behold, to us hath died a Saviour, and he hath made his testament, and hath left a most ample, rich, comfortable, and bleffed legacy; and is not this a good and full bargain? which will be clear if ye confider, 1. The real worth of it: Is there any thing a finner can fland in need of, but it is here? or any ill that a finner can be under, but there is here a remedy for it? Is it the fense of fin, fear of justice, felt wrath, the apprehension of hell? Here are glad tidings, " Remisfion of fins by the blood of Christ;" this is the one express article of the testament here: we tell you, finners, there is a Saviour whole life hath gone for fin, and there is a free absolution to be had, by virtue of his blood, to all who will lay hold on it. 2. Ye have the covenant to make it fure, and remission of fins is particularly mentioned in it for your fatisfaction: nay, look, whatever further is in the covenant, and ye have it also upon your closing with Christ: " According to his divine power, he hath (faith the apostle, 2 Pet. i. 3.) given unto us all things that pertain to life and godlines: "and ver. 4. " Exceeding great and precious promifes are given us," promifes of justification and fanctification. What a bundle of promifes have we, Ezek. xxxvi. " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and wash you from all your uncleanness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you, and will cause you to walk in my flatutes, and do them," &c. There are promifes of fubduing of the body of death, of circum-

cifing the heart, of caufing to love God, of putting his fear in the heart, of healing backflidings. These and many more are articles of this testament, which, as they are very comforting, so are they very frequent and abundant in the covenant. This word of God is, as it were, the index and catalogue of them; and, in effect, there is not a promife in the word of God, but it is here. 3. There is yet fomething more; and that is, the Promiser himself is left in legacy, which no other testator doth: "This is my body (faith he) that was broken for you: open your mouth wide, and I will fill it: I will be thy God:" That is the comprehenfive article of the covenant, and the great Gift, the Gift of gifts; and we may very fafely fay, that as "he could not fwear by any greater than himfelf," fo he could not give a greater gift than himself. Would God there were fuitable conceptions and apprehenfions of this nonfuch Gift; and that he; " in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily," were looked upon as being thus in our offer, and were cordially closed with by faith! That is a great word which we have, Rev. xx. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things:" and how is it performed and fulfilled? " I will be his God:" this is all, and without this there is nothing. 4. Having this Gift, is there any thing that can be added? the text favs, heaven: not that heaven is more than Christ, but this is it, that Christ enjoyed in heaven, is more than Christ enjoyed here on earth; "I will drink it new with you (faith he) in my Father's kingdom." The flood-gates are there, as it were, opened; and the heart enlarged and made capacious to let in the fulness of God, to the filling of the glorified believer, even to the very brim; therefore is communion with Christ faid to be new in heaven. We may have Christ here, and believers have him; but this is an addition, when we have our husband not only in right, but have access immediately and most intimately to converfe with him, and he to converfe with us, when " the queen shall be brought unto the

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king in raiment of needle-work, and taken into the king's palace with gladness and with joy, and the virgins her companions with her:" when there shall be a putting of unbelief to shame, and an eternal banishment of it, and a completing of believers' fatisfaction. The eye of the most profoundly exercised and experienced believers never faw, their ears never heard, neither were they ever able to conceive, the thousandth part of these abundant consolations and heart-rayishing joys, that shall flow from the presence of the Lamb, and of him that fitteth on the throne, when there shall be no intervening ordinances nor temple in that higher house, but " the Lamb shall be light thereof;" and yet all this is offered to finners, and put in Christ's testament to them, to the end it may be made sure. And, lastly, As all these things do concur to make out the excellency of the bargain, so doth this in a special manner, that the price is paid, that they have nothing to lay down, but may come and take all freely, without money and without price.

Secondly, For furthering and strengthening the confolation, ye should consider, that the believer who receives Christ as he is offered in the gospel, though he be a finner, yet he hath a most sufficient, excellent, and unquestionable fecurity for, and right unto all these good things that our dying Lord Jesus hath comprehended in his testament. Believing sinners, what security would ye have? Ye have Christ's word, "I say unto you," &c. Ye have Christ's covenant and teltament, "This is the cup of the new testament in my blood:" and now the testament is confirmed and sealed, fo that neither man nor angel can annul nor alter Our Lord's testament being sealed, it stands legally registered in the court-books of he ven, and it stands legal on these terms, that a sinner who takes with his fin, disclaims his own righteousness, and betakes himself to Christ's righteousness, putting it in the room of his own, for his justification before God, may be fure of Christ's legacy and of heaven: as it is

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fivre that Christ suffered, and instituted this sacrament for his confirmation in the faith of it; the accepting of Christ, the submitting to his righteousness, the yielding to the covenant, and closing with him on his own terms, gives him a right to heaven, and all the riches contained in his testament. To make out this, as being the very thing of the comfortable application of all that hath been faid, and of what we are further to fay, I shall offer these four grounds: The first whereof is, some clear scriptures, that hold forth so much, viz. That as really they shall have life who take Christ and this offer, and close with him, as he really fuffered and fatisfied the justice of God for their fins. The first of these scriptures is, Heb. vii. 24. "Wherefore he is able to fave to the uttermost all that come unto God by him:" he is an able Saviour, able to the uttermost; and there is not a point of latitude, longitude, or altitude beyond the uttermost : he is able to fave them all; and what all? All that will come and make use of him, and give him the credit of his offices; all that will " come unto God by him." A fecond is, Rom. v. 20. where the apostle out-reasons fin, for holding forth the triumph of free grace: "Where fin abounded, (faith he) grace did much more abound; that as fin bath reigned unto death, even fo (and indeed it is an excellent fo) might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jefus Chrift our Lord." Though we would endeayour to our utmost to unfold these words, we would not unfold all that is infolded in them: Did fin make finners liable to death, and triumph over them? fo grace hath erected a throne, by Christ's righteousness, not by inherent holinels, and hath triumphed over fin-The way how grace gives out its orders, and obtains its end, as not by our righteoufness, but by the righteousness of Christ, through faith in him: Justice (to fpeak with reverence) is off the throne, and grace orders and fways all, in making application of Christ's purchased righteousness to believers. The third scripr

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ture is, Acts xiii. 38. " Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;" and ver. 26. "To you is the word of this falvation fent." O glad tidings to the greatest sinners! "Through the Man Christ is preached to you remission of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." What are ye owing? or what can the law, justice, or Satan claim? Ye are justified from all these things. And when he speaks thus to despifers with a "be it known unto you," that the offer is made to them, we may on good ground turn it over to you, and fay, "Be it known unto you, that through Christ Jesus ye may have remission of sins, and be justified from all things from which ve could not be justified by the law of Mofes," according to the terms of the covenant. Let you libel be as long as it will, grace is on the throne, and will receive you. 2dly, Confider that the great defign which the Lord drives in the business of redemption, and publishing of it in the gospel, is that remission of sins and life may be made sure to lost finners that come to Christ: why, I pray, was the covenant made? was it not for this end? as it is, Heb. viii. "This is my covenant (faith the Lord) that I will make with the house of Israel, I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." No more! O fweet found! What is the defign of the Mediator in his fuffering? Is it not this? So, John x. 10. " I am come, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly:" and John xvii. " For their fakes I fanctify myfelf, that they also may be fanctified:" and here, "the new covenant in his blood is for the remission of the sins of many." And this being the mean for attaining the end, it is impossible that it can misgive or fail. adly, Confider the contrivance of the covenant, and ye will see that it is impossible it can fail; heaven and earth shall sooner fail, than one tittle of this sworn and

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confirmed covenant: it cannot fail on the Mediator's fide, for he hath paid the price already; neither can it fail on Jehovah's fide, he will not fail to make application of grace to finners, nor be unfaithful to the faithful Mediator. And fince, upon the one fide, justice had access to exact of Christ the full price, even to the last farthing, by virtue of the covenant of redemption, when he became furety; will not the fame coevnant, on the other fide, make it out, that grace shall have as good access to pardon the sinner, for whom he undertook? " For he (faith the apostle, 2 Cor. v.) was made fin for us, who knew no fin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If the covenant (which is one) hath had the defigned effect in and on the Mediator, as to his fulfilling all that was undertaken by him therein; shall not the promifes made to him, as namely these, Isa. liii. 10. 11. " He shall fee his feed, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; by his knowledge shall my righteous fervant justify many," take effect and be fulfilled? Doubtless they will most certainly and unfrustrably. 4thly, Consider the great experience which the faints have had of the truth of this in all ages: are there any this day before the throne, bleffing the Lamb and him that fits thereon, or any that are on their way thitherward, but they are so many witnesses of this truth, that closing with Christ hath good secufity, for remission of sins, and for eternal life? There shall never be one who shall have it to fay, I trusted to this fecurity, and it failed me: and hereupon rifeth the fweet fong, " Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and bleffing," Rev. v. 12. Nay, even those in the pit shall bear witness to this truth; for (faith the apostle, 2 Cor iii. 15.) "We are unto God a fweet favour in them that are faved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the favour of death unto death, and to the other the favour of life unto life." And in the preceding words he faith, 0

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"Thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." He maketh the triumph of the faithful ministers of the gospel, some way, to be in them that are damned, by his taking vengeance on them, for despising his grace offered; and they are made to fee, that it was a fure bargain to them that through grace embraced it. And if this be fo good a bargain to them that embrace it, and fo very ficker and fure, what, I pray, are we feeking, but that this good bargain and the fufficient fecurity thereof may be taken hold on, as it is proposed? Alter not the terms of it, and indeed it would be very unreasonable to prefume to do to, or fo much as to defire an alteration of them; for, though we had them at our own contriving, we could never, by very far, contrive them for well. Nay, let me fav, if angels were preaching to you, they would think it a privilege to have access to mention his precious name. Now, feeing it is the great defign of the gospel to have sinners closing with Christ on his own terms, O do not frustrate the grace of God: and feeing grace makes offer of life and of remiffion of fins to finners, to fave them freely, let grace get fuch finners to fave as it is feeking, and it fliall be a bargain.

Thirdly, To profecute this yet a little further: Ye should consider, that as there is a good bargain to be had through Christ, and by faith in him, and as there is good security for it; so it is our Lord's delight and good pleasure, and he is very desirous that sinners should make application of it by faith, receive and rest on him and his righteousness, for making themselves eternally happy. We are not speaking of such a happiness and security, that the Lord will be angry at you if ye take hold of it; but of a happiness and security that he is seriously willing ye should receive: and he doth most earnestly beseech you to take hold of this covenant on these sweet and easy terms, that ye be heartily content and well pleased with it. O sensible sinners, do ye indeed believe this, when we

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preach to you, that our Lord Jefus is as defirous to have you faved, as ye are; and that his righteousnness be closed with, as ye are to have it? Nay, more, that there was never a foul more hungry and greedy (when with a heart chock-full of defires after it) to communicate, than he is feriously willing to admit such a foul to communion with him. Then, as ye would do him a pleasure, (and it is all that ye can do) keep not at distance, but step to, and take what he offers; not only the facrament, but himfelf in it, for your Head, Hufband, and Lord. And, that ye may not fcar, stand, nor halt, to do fo, confider, that there is not only a warrant to come, but that he calleth you to come, and is ready heartily to welcome you: come on his call. and his call is no less broad than the call of the gospel; there is a warrant given you on your hearing of the gospel, and quitting of your own righteousness, to receive Christ and his righteousness, and to admit of him to the exercise of his offices about you according to the covenant; and indeed we know not a truth of the gospel that hath more consirmations than this hath, viz. That Christ the Mediator is very willing and defirous that finners close with him, and get the good of his purchase. For the making out of which, take these following considerations: (1.) What is the great defign of the covenant, but this? as we have it, Ifa. lxi. 1-3. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath fent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give to them that mourn, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness:" and this is called " the proclaiming of the acceptable year of the Lord;" wherein all the three persons of the blessed Trinity concur, as is clear, ver. 1. Confider, (2.) All his offices, and ye will find that they preach and proclaim the fame thing: his name is Jesus, because "he saves his people from their fins:" he is king, prieft, and prophet for this end. And

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what faith his preaching and correspondent prayer. John xvii. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me," but that he would fain have them there? And what shall I say? Is there any proof of it that can be given beyond his death? "I lay down my life (faith he) for my sheep:" the falvation of lost elect finners went very near his heart; therefore when none in heaven or on earth can help, then faith he, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." (3.) Confider with what pleafure and delight he went about the work of redemption; as is very clear in that 40th Pfalm, where he heartfomely faith, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will;" I even hasten to undertake it: and, when he is come, he faith, John iv. 34. " It is my meat to do the will of him that fent me, and to finish his work:" and what work was that? Even to lay down his life; to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel; to take away the feud that was betwirt God and them, and to reconcile them to him: and when it cometh to the very push of actual laying down his life, he will not open his mouth to divert it; though he might have commanded more than twelve legions of angels, yet he would not do it: " For this cause (faith he) came I into this world." (4.) Confider the end of all the ordinances: wherefore are they inftituted? What faith the word, but that, " Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of fins?" What fay ministers, but this, "We are ambassadors in Christ's stead, beseeching you to be reconciled unto God?" which evidenceth plainly, that Christ would fain (to speak so) have peace made betwixt God and finners, and them faved: and what faith the facrament, but even the words of the text, " This is the new covenant of my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many?" And can we think on the end of these ordinances, but we must also think on Christ's willingness that sinners should make application of him and his purchase? (5.) Consider further, how he esteems a finner's coming to him; "There is (faith he) joy in

heaven at the conversion of a sinner:" we may fay, that it is the gladues of his heart, when any finner cometh home to him; therefore it is faid, that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, and he shall fee of the travail of his foul, and be fatisfied." Ifa. hii. 10, 11. It is fatisfaction to him for all the travail of his foul, to fee finners coming to and getting good of him; and, in the Song, he is faid " to feed in the gardens, and to be gathering lilies;" yea, that the day of fouls being "espoused to him, is the day of the gladness of his heart." (6.) Consider how weighted (to speak so, with reverence to him) our Lord is. when finners will not make use of him; it is accounted by him, as it were, an affronting of him, even a "treading of the blood of the covenant under foot, and an accounting of it to be an unholy thing," a fort and degree of "doing despite to the Spirit of grace:" he who could look fometimes on the wrath of God and not flied a tear, yet, when he came to Jerusalem, "wept over it." And, upon the other hand, O what complacency hath he in a finner's coming home to him, which makes him fweetly finile and rejoice! (7.) Confider his exceeding great forbearance toward finners while they are straying, and his exceeding hearty welcoming of them when they return. Let an inquest (to fay fo) be led on his procedure with all the hearers of the gospel that are here on earth, and with allthat are in heaven and hell, and all of them will be constrained to subscribe to the truth of this, that he is full of long-fuffering: Doth he not spare even the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? and doth he not only spare his own, but pity them as a father pitieth his children? And that wonderful welcome of the father to his prodigal fon, is nothing to Christ's welcoming of a repenting finner, being but a dark refemblance of it; he casts not up to him his bygone taults, neither fays, What is this you have done, miferable wretch? No fuch word; but, "This is my fon that was dead, and is alive; that was loft, and now is

found." Believe it, O believe it, (which is the very scope of the parable) our Lord Jesus is as glad, in a holy way, at a finner's coming home. (8.) Confider how easy our Lord is to be pleased with an honest mint or effay that is made of returning to him: he is fo very willing that a finner make application of his righteousness, that, where there is reality, he will, as it were, take half a faith for faith, were it even but like " a smoaking flax, or bruised reed, or a grain of mustard feed;" he will take a fincere resolution to confess, for the confession of sin; which is clear, Pfal. xxxii. "I faid (faith David) I will confess my transgression, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." If he had propoled the offer of life on fuch terms as would have wearied us all our days, we ought to have judged him willing that we should partake of it, for it cost him very dear; but when it is not Abraham's faith only. but any faith, how weak foever, if found, that he graciously accepts, how doth it set forth his great willings ness? " Him that cometh to me, (faith he) I will in no wife cast out." The word is doubled in the original nal, " I will not, not;" to flew the holy paffionateness of our Lord's defire, and his exceeding great willingness to have finners closing with him. So, Ifa. xlv. Salvation is promifed even to a look, "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be faved:" and if finners cannot well look, think but honeftly, and let their heart yield, and it shall be a bargain: "He that is a thirst, let him come," Rev. xxii. And, if there be scarce the pain of hunger or thirst, " The Spirit and the bride fay, Come; and whofoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely:" and this willingness is nothing else but the thought and defire of an heart confenting to accept of his offer. Or, if this be not little enough, there is less yet, Pfal. xxxvii. 7. "Rest in the Lord:" the word (as it is on the margin and Pfal. lxii. 1.) is, " Be filent to the Lord " if the heart cannot so well and distinctly say Amen to the bargain, let it, as it were, hold its tongue, or hold

its peace; let it be filent, fay nothing against it, or give a filent quit answer, or, by way of approbation and acceptation, keep filence; and it shall be accepted; O wonderful flooping! doth not this declare and manifeftly preach the exceeding great willingness that our fweet Lord Jefus hath to communicate and apply his purchase to sinners? (9.) Consider the persons on whom he confers the offer, and the manner how he profecutes it; and it may yet further hold forth how feriously willing he is that sinners should welcome it, and be made up by it: Who, I pray, are called, Luke xiv. 21. It is " the poor, the blind, the maimed, the halt, the lame," &c. And are there any that can fay, they are worse? If thou say, I can do nothing, I am maimed and cannot come; the gospel bids call the cripple, and provides him " a chariot of the wood of Lebanon, paved with love," and having (to speak so) all the feats and cushions of it of love, Cant iii. 10. and giveth stilts or crutches of grace to under propand eagles wings to carry them. If thou be a confused body, and wist not what to do, it bids call the blind. If thou be poor, blind, miserable, wretched, and naked, and vet having conceited and fancied that thou wast rich, thou art not excluded for all that; for, Rev. iii. 18. Laodicea confifts of a hypocritical pack, and company of lukewarm professors, who are so loathsome to Christ, that he threatens to spew them out of his mouth; and yet to fuch, even to fuch, he faith, "I counsel thee to buy of me," &c. And, if these be invited, who can exempt or exclude themselves from the offer or bargain? Doth not these things most convincingly and irrefragably demonstrate his willingness, when there is not a finner that is either poor, proud, vain, hypocritical, &c. but he is included in the call of the gospel? (10.) Consider his urgency and preffingness in making and bearing home the offer: O how long-fuffering is he! and with what padence doth he wait on! It is not an embassage that is broken up if it be not presently closed with, as a hasty

man doth; but " all the day have I stretched out my hands to a gainfaying people," Ifa. lxv. "Jerufalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee !" &c. Mat. xxiii. How doth wisdom stand and press her invitation, Prov. i. 20. and viii. 1, 2, &c. Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. "Turn ye at my rebuke, why will ye die?".
Luke xiv. 23. "Go to the high-ways, and compel them to come in." I John iii. 23. " This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of the Son of God." It is not left as an indifferent thing, at finners option, to do or not do; but the fame authority that enjoins keeping the fabbath, and that forbids curfing and fwearing, doth lay on this command of believing: "Come to the wedding, believe, man and woman, and be faved." And what is all this to the bowels of mercy, grace, and love that are in him? "His belly is like ivory, overlaid with fapphires: his face is white and ruddy," a part whereof this is; and yet it is nothing (to fpeak fo) to the principal copy, which is his heart; that is a great depth, even the very centre and element, as it were, of love. "God is love," faith John, as if he were nothing else but love: and what a love must it be, where he is (to speak so) turned into love in the person of Christ? Angels cannot to the full confider of it, nor conceive it; your hearts cannot reach it. Sure there is much, wonderfully much ground here to lay it for an undoubted truth, that our Lord Jefus is exceedingly defirous of the falvation of finners, and many finners, and is in great readiness to make his righteousness forthcoming to them, and heartily to welcome all that come to him.

The fecond use is of exhortation: and ye may at first blush to see whither it runs, even to stir us up to accept of, and embrace these good news with glad hearts. Is there here a good bargain, and a sure way through faith to make use of it? and is Christ so willing to communicate it? What shall I say to you! is it not a pity to miss it? Nay, would ye do Christ a pleasure? then lay weight on his righteousness, and give

him finful fouls to be faved by him. If we fought. great or hard things from you, to please him, would you not judge yourselves obliged to grant them? But when he faith on the matter, Give me your fouls to be faved, and I shall account that fatisfaction to me for all the travail of my foul: O how unspeakably great is your obligation, readily and cheerfully to grant fo loving and reasonable a request! If such a gracious offer had never been made, it would have been, " Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and there would have been a mighty great fcaring and trembling to draw near; but when it is not to the " mount that cannot be touched," nor to Moses, that we are called to come, but to a Saviour, whom ye cannot pleafe better than (nay, not at all, but) by receiving of him, and whom in some respect ye cannot displease at all, if we receive him; let me beseech and obtest you, as ye would not be found guilty of treading this blood of the covenant under foot, and as ve would not for ever debar yourselves from remission of fins with him, make use, O make use of this propitiation for fin, and for procuring your pardon and peace. Would to God this were the fruit of fuch a day's work! for indeed it is our great work, and the very scope of all our preaching: and, behold, I proclaim to you, that remission of sins is to be had through his blood, and that there shall not be any upbraiding of you, nor casting up of bygones, if ye will indeed receive him, and close with him, on his own sweet, easy, and very reasonable terms. O then sit not this urgent call, and the day of your merciful visitation.

And, to press this exhortation a little, consider, that grace hath a throne, and shall triumph in this gospel, either in your gaining, or in being avenged upon you for your despiting of its richest and freest offers. Let us, I pray, reason the matter with you a little: and, I. Are there not finners here? There is not a defign in the gospel to save any others but sinners; and, if so, " to you is the falvation fent," who by nature are fin-

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ners, enemies, and at feud with God: the doctrine of this golpel carries in its bosom remission of fins. Would to God ye were fuitably affected with fin, and judging yourselves, that so ye might be in some capacity to receive it. 2. Tell me, what is it that ye would be at? Is it remission of sins? it is here: would ye have the covenant and promises? here they are: is it Christ himself that ye would have, because ye dare not trust to a promise without a cautioner? here he is: or would ye have heaven, and be eternally happy? it is also here. Consider then, I beseech you, what is in your offer: dare you fay, that the fecurity is not valid, good, and sufficient? And, if ye should, there are many witnesses in heaven against you, and also the facrament on earth, which now is offered to confirm you. This bargain, therefore, and its fecurity, must be received, or else wo unto you for ever: this word . which we now preach, nay, these stones, shall bear witness against you, that our Lord Jesus was willing to fave you, and every one of you, and ye would not; and therefore your blood shall be required at your own hand, and we be found without any the least culprable accession to it. 3. Ye are either to communicate to-day, or ye are only to be hearers and spectators: whether the one or the other, is there not a necessity that ye close this bargain? If ye be to communicate, will ye take the bread and wine, and misken and flight Christ? If fo, ye will eat and drink your own damnation. Would you have the character of a right communicant? This is it, that ye renounce your own, and trust to his righteousness, and take the facrament for a confirmation of your interest in it: if ye come thus, ye shall be welcome; for this ordinance is appointed for this very end. If ye be not to communicate, this word of the gospel comes to you, though ye have precluded yourselves from the facrament, either through ignorance or scandal. It might be a sweet communion to you, if yet Christ get a welcome; and it should, I affure you in his name, make way to a

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new communion here or in heaven. But, 4. I would a little more particularly befrech you to confider, that ye must either give Christ a welcome or not, a yea or a nay-fay, a grant or a denial; for there is no mean or middle: this day shall not pass and go by without a hit or a mifs, (to speak fo) Christ will not knock at your door, and nothing follow or be done: it will either be, that Christ was at fuch a time proposed, commended, and made offer of, and his people would have none of him; or that the heart opened as the heart of Lydia unto the Lord, and that falvation came to the foul, as it did to Zaccheus' house. Your time is but thort and uncertain, ye know not if ye shall come another fabbath to hear; some that now speak to you. and some that hear, are daily removed: and this bids you make hafte to creep in to him quickly, without longer delay, while his arms are stretched out to receive and embrace you. There are feveral forts among you. that keep at a a distance from Christ; but I would have all of you foberly to think, whether ye will fay yea or nay. There is here what may filence and fatisfy any foul that thwarts with the call of God : can ye fay that there is any better bargain, any better fecurity, or any heartier call and invitations? "Let us come and reason together, faith the Lord, (Isa. i. 18, 19.) though your fins be as crimfon, they shall be as white as fnow; though they be red as fcarlet, they shall be as wool: if ve be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be destroyed." Our Lord's blood is of that efficacy, that it can make crimfon and fearlet-coloured fins white, white as fnow and wool: why do ve then linger, flick, fland, or halt?

Ye will, it may be, object, and fay, First, I would fain come, it I durst. But consider, I pray von, that it is Christ and the covenant, and grace on the throne, that call you; and this is their voice, "Thou hast spoken and done evil as thou couldft, yet return unto me." And therefore fear and tremble, yet come; fear,

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and bring your fins with you to the fountain to be washed, and to a skirt of his love to be covered thereby; and you shall on your coming be cleanfed and covered. But it may be, ve will next object, and fay, I would fain come, but I cannot come. For answer, det me ask you. Is there a foul in hell this day that can fay, I would fain have come, and could not come? That which we feek of you is, to make no long, tedions, or toillome voyage: if there be honesty, it is only, that when Christ is come to you, ye will be willing to receive him; and if ye thus come, ye are believers. Do not, I befeech you, mistake, in thinking (and thereby obstructing your own coming) that perfons, must first be believers, and then come to Christ: no; but first ve must come with the little glimmering that ve have, and lame as ye are, and it will go with you; his chariot is waiting for you; and the very cripplest of you, that cannot come of yourselves to Christ, if we be willing to close with him on his own terms, he shall come to you. But it is like, some will, in the third place, object and fay, Alas! I am very indifposed to come. For answer, I shall grant it may indeed be true; but yet confider who are invited, it is, the "poor, blind, halt, maimed, wretched, and miferable." O what unfitness have fuch! and yet noneof them are excepted against. I would have none to be prefumptuous and vain; but, if indeed ye would fain come, ye cannot come fo indisposed, as the bargain will on that account be caft: it will not be the want of a disposition that shall east it, else the cripple and blind, and lukewarm Laodiceans had never been invited. Whether is a fuitable disposition of your own making, or of Christ's? Sure it is of his; and can we expect ought from him without coming to him, or believing in him? But, fourthly, fome will object. and fay, Alas! I have often come, and broken away again; how can I then believe that I am invited? For answer, I would defire you to consider whither that objection tends even to question the truth of the gol-

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pel: our Lord Jefus faith, " he came to fave finners;" and ye fay, I would fain know if that be true or not. If ve be poor, blind, miserable, naked, &c. and have need, he commands us to invite and call fuch; and it is the way of unbelief to make them fcar at Christ, and stand farthest back from him, who have most need to draw near to him: if ye have come and broken afterward, come again; and where the knot hath not holden, cast a new one. But, alas! there is a fort of careless atheists and secure hypocrites, whom this gospel strikes dead; and carnal worldlings, who have no ferious thoughts of what is coming: I would pose such, and alk you, Care ve for your fouls? care ve for remission of fins? or care ve for the enjoying of God? If ye do, then fure it is unspeakably of your concernment to confider and close with the call and offer of the gofpel: and if there be any of you that have loved your idols, and after them will go, I would defire you in fobernefs to fay to it, Will ye prefer any idol to Christ, the creature to the Creator, the temporal finful being of your body to the eternal well-being of both foul and body? If ye will, then be fure that this conviction, in your judgment and conscience, will go along with fuch a curfed resolution, that Christ and heaven were the absolutely best bargain.

The third rife ferves to cheer and folace finners that have betaken themselves to Christ. O all ye who are glad to hear tell of fuch a Saviour, and whose heart is even now content to take him, and to renounce all idols for his fake: we have, I. Remillion of fins, not only to offer, but even to proclaim freely to you: " He that believes is passed from death to life, and shall not come into condemnation: there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," as it is, Rom. viii. 1. If ye fay, What will become of the fins that we are now under the guilt of? I answer, That they shall be freely forgiven: "In those days and that time (faith the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. 1. 20.)

the iniquity of Ifrael shall be fought for, and there shall be none; and the fins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I referve." When all the books shall be open, there shall be nothing found to charge upon the believing elect; " It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn?" Sin is pardoned to you, as really as it was to Abraham and to David; and heaven is made as fure to you as it was to them who are now in it: ye have the fame. Surety, the fame Saviour, the fame Covenant. 2. What promife would ye have? I know ye need many; but isthere any of all the promises that is not in the covenant? Yea, we have the covenant and Christ both, for "he is given for a covenant" to you: " All thingsare yours, (as it is, I Cor. iii.) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things prefent, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's:" ye have a title and right to all the promises. and may comfort yourselves in the assured hope of the performance of them. O that many were in capacity to receive this confolation ! 3. There may be a weari-Some time here, and who knows what trials and fcatterings may overtake you, what times may go over you, ere ye get another communion? It were best then, that ye who seriously mind to cleave to Christ and his covenant, were making for them: and therefore lay up this confolation, C believers, comfort yourselves in this bleffed bargain; ye have Christ and remission of fins, take the facrament as a feal thereof: there is a day coming, when ye will drink it new in the kingdom of heaven; O cheer yourfelves in the hope of it, and for the time in this refemblance of-it, . when-ye fee a poor man perfonating our Lord Jefus Christ, and by his warrant offering him to you: the day is coming when there shall be no resemblance, no temple, no ministers, no ordinances, no facrament; but ye shall drink of that new-wine, the grapes whereof grow on Christ Jesus, " the tree of life in the midst of the paradife of God;" even the wine of the confo-

lation of glory, that shall keep you in a continual holy ravishment, when all tears shall be wiped away, and that we shall have fully satisfying blessedness in the immediate vision and fruition of God: and since it is fo, " let the joy of the Lord be your strength." There shall not a believer come to the Lord's table this day, but there is a day coming when he and she shall drink it new, without interruption eternally, in the kingdom of heaven: "Father, (faith Christ, John xvii.) I will, that these whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory:" and again, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them:" and faith he, Rev. iii. 12. " I will write upon him my new name, and the name of the city of my God," &c. that is, the communication and participation of the glory of the head, as the members are capable. Labour. O labour to have your appetites sharpened, and your longing defires quickened to tafte of the new wine : it will be fresh, strong, and sweet there. And, feeing the Lord allows you fuch confolation, take it, and take the facrament as a pledge of it: and think with thyfelf, O believer in Christ, What ! shall I, finful and unworthy I, ere long fit with Christ at his table in glory? and is this a fign and reprefentation of it under a vail? "What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godlines?" Ought I not to love him much, and " to continue with him in all temptations;" The kingdom will superabundantly make up all: the very first draught of this new wine will make fighing and forrow to flee away. Let your fouls be comforted in what ye have, and in the expectation of what is coming: there are great things coming; ye have a rich and liberal, a free and frank bestower, and notably good security. Come therefore all of you to the due ufe-making of the covenant, and of the facrament in reference to this end: and the Lord himself, that calls you, enable you to come aright, that it may be a closed, sealed, and confirmed bargain betwixt him and you this day, that ye may have ground

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SERMON XIV.

A Thanksgiving SERMON after the COMMUNION, the last that ever the Author preached on such an occasion, at Glasgow.

On MAT. XXVI. 29.

But I fay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Our bleffed Lord Jesus is now near taking leave of his apostles, and preparing them for the storm they were to meet with: and, for the confolation of them, and of all his followers to the end of the world, he instituteth this ordinance of the communion, to be his love token in his absence; that all his people might be confident of his respect to them, as well as to those then present; and that all of them might thereby be put and kept in the remembrance of him till his coming again.

He hath given them a massy and marrowy sum of the gospel in the words immediately preceding: "This cup (faith he) is my blood of the new testament, shed for the remission of the sins of many:" to which he subjoins, partly for warning, partly for confolation, these now read, " But I say unto you, I will not drink honceforth of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom:" as if he had faid, Though now we be fitting here at the communion.

table heartformely together, I tell you, that I and ye will have no more communions here on earth: the participle but is to give them a watch-word; and vet, according to his bleffed manner and wont, he hath the best word hindmost, and tells them glad news on the back of it: for they might fay, Wo's us, fweet Master, will we never meet again at a communion? Think not fo, faith he; we shall yet meet again, and have a fweet communion in heaven. This then is a very heartsome dismis: though he sends them away, advertifing them of a fform coming, and though they knew not well what was before them; yet he heartensand encourages them with a promife, that they have this wine new, or the thing fignified by it, with a farother reliff, in glory; and that then he and they should have good days of it. I shall say no more to the exposition, scope, or division of the words: take this one doctrine from them, and then a few things on the connection, for use.

The great doctrine then implied is this, "That believers will have a fweet communion in Christ's Father's kingdom in heaven.". This is expressly in the text, and confirmed by other scriptures, as namely, Luke xxii. 29. "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." This is that communion, even a partaking of Christ's glory in his Father's kingdom, and with him in it; and, John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gavest. me, I have given them ;" and, ver. 24. " Father I will, that they whom thou hast given me may be with me,. to behold my glory which thou hast given me:" which words fet forth, not only the certainty of the thing, a glorious place and day, and the excellency of the feast, but also a fort of peremptoriness in reference thereto: "Father, I will," faith he. When he prayed that the cup might depart from him, he does it conditionally and with submission; but, when he prays for

communion in glory to him and his followers, there is no fubmission, (to speak to) because it was according to the covenant of redemption, and therefore he is absolute and holily peremptory in it; and the "Father hears him always:" fo in the epiftles written to the seven churches of Asia, Rev. ii. z. it is promised by our Lord, to him that overcometh, that he " will give him the hidden manna, the white stone, and new name, to fit with him on his throne :" let all believers on earth be gathered together, they cannot tell what this is, what a Manna, what a Communion this will be; it quite transcends all experience, all expression, and conception: only in the text it is called. 1. Wine, which is a very cordial thing; it is " meat indeed, and drink indeed." 2. It is called new wine; we taste of it here, but it is new, and hath another relish there. 3. It is in a fweet place, not in any earthly house or upper chamber, not in a material temple made with hands, but in Christ's Father's kingdom, that new Jerusalem, that tabernacle of God, where God dwelleth with angels and glorified faints; "the city paved with pure gold; the gates whereof are pearl; the foundations of the wall whereof are garnished with all manner of precious stones; which hath no fun, but the glory of God and of the Lamb is the light thereof." O believers, who have some of you but cot houses, smoaky holes here, ye shall have manfions of glory there, admirably good accommodation: it is with excellent and nonfuch company, even with Chrift; for he fays, that " he will drink this wine new with us in his Father's kingdom." It is a great matter to get leave to fit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, and the prophets, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the rest of them, with John the Baptist, with Paul, John, Peter, and the other apostles, and with the whole congregation of the firstborn; but it is more, to drink the new wine with Christ himself in heaven, who is (to say so) the very heart of heaven. This communion hath in it these

five notable qualifications. r. It is immediate: all our communion here is mediate, ordinances and mimisters intervene and come betwixt us and him, and there is need of faith in order to it; but, in that communion above, there is no intermediate mean, then we shall fee his face, as is faid, Rev. xxii. q. there is no temple, no ministers, no preaching, no light of candle or fun there, but the Lamb and the Lord God, who enlightens it; the tabernacle of ordinances will then be taken down, every thing which is in part will be done away, when that which is perfect is come; "the Lord shall feed, and the Lamb shall lead us by these living waters." 2. There is in it a sharing of the fame glory with the Mediator; he and we shall drink of one cup, fit at one table, and fit on one throne, Rev. iii. 21. We shall partake of Christ's glory: "I will (faith he, John xvii. 24.) that they behold my glory;" there we get eminently " the new name, and the name of the city of Christ's God," Rev. iii. there "his name will be in our forebeads," Rev. xxii. 4. and "our vile bodies will be made conformable to Christ's plorious hody," Philip. iii. 21. Our spirits will be made pure as he is pure; when we shall be raised in incorruption, we shall bear the image of the heavenly Adam, and our bodies shall be made spiritual. It cannot be said what this will be, to be made partakers of Christ's glory, when the fulnels of the Godhead shall be communicated to us objectively, and when God shall be all in all. 4. It is a communion fatiffying completely; if Christ's communion be full, ours shall be full: in this communion none shall complain of defertion, none shall defire more of the Spirit, or more confolation; for it shall be full: then shall we sfyingly "know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge, and he filled with all the fulness of God." This water of life shall fatisfy to the full the greatest thirst of such as long for Christ; there shall not be (to. fpeak fo) an empty corner in the most capacious Toul. Thou poor hungry and thirsty, empty and indigent:

believing foul shall then be full, and kept full (according to creature capacity) to the very brim; and thy heart, that is now narrow and firaitened, flight be wide ened and enlarged them, to take in this fweet and fatisfying wine; there shall not be one vessel in glory, but shall be brimful with the new wine of these strong consolations of God, being dilated, capacitated, elevated, and enlarged for that very end 4. This communion is uninterrupted; there shall be nothing to mar it, no cross, no fin, no temptation to fin: for no unclean thing enters within the gates of the new Jerusalem; no curse; no erv in those streets, no weeping, no forrow, no fighing for any thing past, nor hord ror nor fear from the apprehension of any evil coming, nor any the least michtuning of the Lamb's fong. of praise; the heart shall (to speak so) be so stringed and bended, as it shall never again stack in its bent, but be still kept in its highest note: our harps shall never hang any more on the willows, but we shalf keep them still in our hand, chaunting the praises of the Redeemer to that new heavenly tune, never heard on earth, with palms of victory in our hands, and crowns of glory on our heads, following the Lamb whitherfoever he goes. 5. It is an eternal communion; we shall drink for ever with him, and be abund dantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and made holily drunk " with the rivers of his pleafure, with whom is the fountain of life, and in whose light we shall eternally see light;" whose well of life is always running, " in whose presence is fulness of joys, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore." Though, through all eternity, thousands and millions will be drinking of this new wine, yet it shall never be the less, but is and shall be still fresh and slowing.

Now for application: Let me alk you, Do ye believe this, that there is fuch a day coming, and that these are the true and faithful sayings of God? O if we all that hear me this day did indeed believe it! The belief of it, sure, is very suitable, and would make a

very fweet life; ye will never be holy, ye will never aright fear nor love God, ve will never hate fin, nor be heartsome in his service, neither will ve be truly thankful, till ye really believe it. I am afraid, if atheifts, earthly wretches, drunkards, tipplers, curfers, fweaters, hypocrites, &c. were fingled out and separated from among us, there would be found to be but a fmall number who believe this: do ye, or can ye believe it, that have your portion in this life, and feek no more? Nay, believers, if indeed ve believe it, why are ye so heartles? why envy ve the poor prosperity of the men of the world? why do ye not press after this mark and prize? If ye believed it fuitably, your hearts would laugh within you, your spirits would rejoice, your faces would fomeway shine; and what is spoken this day, would have a divine splendour and lustre in your eyes: if you believe it, why is not your work and business to live so as ye may hope to drink of this cup of the new wine with Christ in heaven? Though ve should drink water all your days, this wine will abundantly compensate that; though now the bread of some of you be but brown, this feast of truly royal dainties is before you; our Christian friends, that are gone, are feeding fweetly on it. Long, O believers, to be with them; and take it not ill, though ye be here somewhat straitened and kept scarce, and have but a little portion, a fmall pittance and fcant measure of the things of this world, when others fare well and fumptuously, live high, are gorgeously apparelled: your feast and royal robes are before you. The rich and great men of this world, whose portion is in this life, care little for poor bodies that feek God: care ye as little for their portion as they care for yours; they shall not, a little hence, get a drink, nay, not a drop of cold water, when ye shall drink this new wine, this royal wine in abundance: Christ's " servants shall eat, when they shall be hingry;" his fervants " shall drink, when they be thirsty; they shall sing for joy of heart, when the others shall mourn and howl

for vexation of spirit:" as it is, Isa. lxv. 13. O feek after clearness of interest in him, that ye may thoroughly believe, love, and long for this life. This heartfome communion with Christ in heaven is referved for them that keep communion with him here on earth, and to them it is here promifed. I will not fav. that none can get to heaven but those who get the facrament; but this I dare boldly fay, that those who have not communion with Christ here, shall never get communion with him hereafter; and whoever communicates honestly here, shall have communion with Christ in glory. Be ye comforted who believe in Christ, who covenant honestly with him, and who hope in his mercy; for he and ye together shall have a completely full, immediate, uninterrupted, and eternal communion in heaven, that shall never end. Need ye be confirmed in the truth of this? his word may ferve you, and ve have the facrament belide: he hath left his word to hearten poor believers under all their inward and outward troubles, under their spiritual maladies and bodily ficknesses and infirmities, and to asfure them, for their comfort, that there is a good life coming, and he hath given the facrament as a pledge of it; will ye then feriously consider, whether this word belong to you, and if ve may with his allowance hearten yourselves from it, that there is a day coming that ye shall get communion with Christ in heaven? He doth not mean, that all that get the facrament get this communion; for Judas, who not improbably got the facrament, is excluded. Would ye know then, who have been honest communicants to-day, that may expect this heavenly communion? And, methinks, that every one of you, that hath any ferious concern for your fouls, will be roused here, and greedily longing for marks and evidences of it. But, if any of you would be at evidences to make you fecure, I declare I have none fuch to give you: but I shall hint at two or three, which may be directions in duty to you who mind honeftly; the first whereof is, Luke xxii. 20.

"Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptation, and I appoint to you a kingdom." Here it is clear, that these two go together, viz. continuing with Christ in his temptations, and coming to his kingdom. In a word, it is not to be religious for the fashion, but in earnest; it is not to be religious for a day or two, or in some trials only, but to continue in it, and with him in his temptations, whatever they be: not only to be religious when religion is countenanced, but when it is discountenanced, and persecution is met with for its fake, and when there are many fnares and temptations to draw you away; it is a stedi fast abiding with Christ in trying times, summer and winter, to to fay: if a blast of trial and temptation come, and ye grow giddy and wavering in the truth, or if a spirit of profanity come (and look for it, and lay your account with it) and ve be ready to laugh and give in your taunt, libe, and mock with the profane, against the power of godliness and the godly t away with your religion, it is not a continuing with Christ in his temptations. This mark puts you to work. (and fuch marks are fafest) " To him that overcometh," is a word often repeated, Rev. ii. 3. and fet always before you the promise of glory and communion with Christ in beaven; on such, and on such only, will Christ " write his new name, and set them on his throne." A fecond mark is, Ye that do indeed keep communion with Christ here, and war against your lufts, without any allowed peace, truce, or cessation of arms, till ye get them brought down, routed, and ruined, by an entire victory, shall partake of this communion in glory: if ve do not deliberately give up with Christ to keep company with idols, ve may have hope; but the unbelieving and fearful, that cannot endure to look a lust nor a trial for Christ in the face, and who, it may be, are just now wearving of such a day and fermon, and it is even as a prison to them to be restrained so long from worldly business and pleasures, are utterly excluded from all hope, while they remain

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fuch. Serious fouls will, belike, here fay, We are fighting, but we come no fpeed. I answer, Let not that discourage you, if there be no hope to come fpeed in the end; continue in the fight, and you shall come fpeed: Christ is thy Captain, and a Captain of falvation, at whose back none fell fo as not to arise. A third mark is, John xvii. 6-8. where Christ is praying for the disciples, that they may be admitted to this communion; and faith he, " I gave them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them." The believer receives Christ's words, and keeps them, and makes exception against none of them; when he takes one word, he casts not at another; he takes not one piece of the covenant of grace, and rejects another; but univerfally he approves and accepts of all Christ's words, and more particularly, and in a special manner, of the comman of believing. Thus fpeaks the Pfalmist, Pfal. cxix. 128. " I esteem all thy commandments concerning all things to be right:" fo faith Christ of the disciples, " I have given them thy words, and they have received them:" and particularly (as if he had faid) I proposed a special fuit to them, that they would be friends with thee, and be reconciled to thee through faith in me; and they received that word: "therefore glorify them." Ye may possibly think these marks difficult; but would you have a religion that will put you to no pains? fuch marks are high and hard indeed to flesh and blood, and to your lufts; but what loss is in mortifying these? Is it any prejudice to you to receive Christ's words, and to keep them, and to follow him in his temptations, when an hundred fold more than ve can Jose is to be gotten by so doing? And therefore we declare to you from the word of the Lord, if ye refolve not to live as having on you the wedding-garment, we cannot fay that ye shall eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom.

In the next place, According to the method propofed, ve should consider the connection, and how

this purpose comes in; even thus, as if the Lord had faid. Ye have an excellent communion day; but ye and I will have no more together in this world: whence observe, "That the best communion day that God's people have here, hath a but in it, or fomething that makes it appear defective:" only in that communion in heaven there is no but, no defect ; and it implies, 1. His faying to them, Ye have now been at the communion, but ere long ve shall meet with temptation and trouble; and as he faid, fo within a very little it came to pass. So may I say, We are here now, but do we know how foon a temptation may affault and prevail? The tempter is waiting on, and hath, it is like, given in his petition for a permiffion to effay fuch and fuch a person, by some suitable temptation, ere to-morrow; and he offers, it may be, to make his hypocrify to be discovered: and it will be a fad matter, if any of you stumble and be overtaken with the temptation. e. It looks to the feattering that was coming: we will not (to if he had faid) be all together at the communion again; " for it is written. will fmite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be fcattered." It is more than probable that we shall not all drink and eat at one table again; are there not fome, both ministers and people, dead and gone fince the left communion? And ye may want fome of both cre ye get another; and may not there fome fad divifion, trouble, or confusion arise, to the offending of forme, and laying of them afide? Nav, forme may be offended at these same ordinances; Satan hath many ways to break in upon us: nay, let me tell you, that a cloud of perfecution may come and cover us, that we shall not dare to come, or may scruple to come to fuch an ordinance, though we be now dawted, and, as it were, dandled on his knee. 3. It may look to their being deprived of God's company and bodily prefence. And who knoweth but there may be a cloud of defertion on ordinances, and a vailing of Christ's presence? I forewarn you, that it is to be feared;

which fays, we should keep him well while we have him, and "not stir him up till he please," as the, bride's frequent defire and resolution is in the Song-4. It may look to death that is coming, and will put an end to all communions here; after which there will be no more communions on earth. And indeed it is fuitable that ye were now bethinking yourselves. What if we never get another? Ought we not then to feed well on this? If any thing have been amiss or wanting, labour to get it made up. O believers in Christ, take home a scaled covenant with you, and read it over and over again: if any defect hath been on your part, write it yet in; for, if any blank be, it is certainly on our fide, and not on Christ's: and indeed it is God's mercy, that a feal of his covenant may be useful a long time after it is gotten: slighted baptisms and abused communions may be yet useful, if we could make the right use of them: and I do not question but this communion did the disciples more good after Christ was gone from them, than it did now when he was with them at table. 5. It may look to eternity. Now we have living men and women on earth, but within a little we will be gone, " and places will know us no more:" very probably, within twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, we shall be either drinking of this new wine in heaven above, or of that cup of the unmixed wine of the wrath of God, having no rest day nor night. O profane atheist, unbeliever, hollow-hearted hypocrite, and flighter of Christ all thy days, what a bitter draught will that be, when God shall put into thy hand the cup of his indignation, which shall be for ever poured out unto thee, and fliall never come from thy head? O drunkard, tippler, and belly god, bethink thyfelf how that draught will go down with thee: the Lord, "with his one foot on earth. and the other on the fea, with an uplifted hand to heaven, hath fworn, that, within a little, time shall be no more." Ye that are young people may, if ye will, follow the fight of your eyes, and the way of your own

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hearts, and may take your pleasure in the days of your youth: but know and remember that God will bring you to judgment: your time is wearing away, and ye will wear away; it is but a little, and ye will hear no more preaching, and get, no more warnings. O take them in time, if ye be wife : and the Lord perfuade

you fo to do.

In the third place, The scope of the advertisement and confolation is observable. When he was giving them the cup, and told them, that " it is the cup of the new testament in his blood," he subjoins, "But I fay unto you, I will not drink henceforth, &c. This he doth, first, Because he would fend them away advertifed and affured, that there is a farther ben, (to fpeak fo) a more inward room in religion, than the most lively and comfortable ordinance here on earth doth afford; a higher and more intense spiritual practice, than any outward part of religion : he would have them to go away thinking with themselves, that all is not done that may be done; that all is not win at which may be had; that they are not yet holy enough, nor happy enough. O place not, for Christ's sake, price not your religion here, I was at the facrament, or I got my communion: wo to that empty found, and to them who lean all their weight on it; ye may come and abide here for a time, and go away leaving the marrow of the matter behind you: all is not yet done. A fecond reason is, "Because he would have them parting and going from the communion with fome thoughts of death, of their approaching change, and paffing out of time, and of eternity quickly marching upon them." And indeed it were good going from the communion, and from every other ordinance, with fuch thoughts as thefe, Death is fast commg on me, and I will foon be gone, (faith our Lord on the matter to the disciples) and ye will ere long follow me, and it is not these ordinances that will be your life in eternity. It were good that we came to the Lord's table, to preaching and prayer, and went

away as dying men and women: this would lay much of our pride, deaden us to the world, and make us endeavour to hold a loose grip of all things in it, and would keep us under the kindly fense of the change. ableness, uncertainty, and short continuance of them all; and might be of more use and worth to us, than twenty thanksgiving sermons: labour then to go from every ordinance, as if ye were not to enjoy another. A third reason may be, "That our Lord would lead in his followers to look after some stamp of heaven, and of the glorious communion that is coming on their spirits; and would have them going from the ordinances with fuch thoughts." Alas! we have very few fuch thoughts; our conversation is very little or not at all in heaven. Believers think, and think often, that these rags will be rent off us, and we shall be set down on the throne with Christ in that raiment of needle work. It is a good token, when a person comes from a communion, from preaching, and prayer, more divine and heavenly, making every ordinance the step of a stair, as it were, to ascend upward, having a high efteem of heaven, and a heart holily eager and bent on it, content, nay defirous to be gone, whenever he shall fee it meet; and, till then, putting on and keeping on the whole armour of God, making for one affault of temptation after another; heavenly in his whole walk, in his actions, words, and thoughts. As ye would not, O believers, interrupt your communion with God in Christ, study to be heavenly in your conversation; for faith the apostle, Philipair. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour." Lay afide (as if he had faid) your earthlymindedness, away with that; and be heavenly in your conversation, for our conversation is such; and believers are described to be such as love Christ's appearing. A fourth reason may be, "That our Lord would hearten and comfort his disciples, and send them away refreshed;" yea, it is to root out their unbelief, and to arm them against approaching trials.

So then, 1. " Our Lord Jefus allows believers to go from the communion, and proportionally from every ordinance rightly come to, cheerful and comforted:" And therefore he leaves them with this word, telling them that they will have hard and fad days; but withal bids them cheer themselves in the affired expectation of a day coming, when he and they shall drink the new wine in heaven. Our Lord would have believers humble, thinking on death, and making ready for it daily; yet he would not have them tortured with the thoughts of it, but cheerful, as having his joy for their strength; though he would not have their joy carnal, but heavenly: and it is the token of a right communicant, and of a good hearer of the word, when a person goes away from it more spiritually cheered and more heavenly-minded. 2. " There is nothing that can be more heartsome, cheering, and refreshing to the believer, than the lively hope of communion, and of a feat on the throne in heaven with Christ; and it is the mark and character of a believer to have no lower defign." Alas for the fenfeless way of hearing the word, and of communicating, customary to many, who have no other nor higher defign than to partake of the outward ordinance! It is a heartforme thing to go from the table of the Lord with this fweet and heavenly meditation, Christ and I will meet again, ere long, at a table in heaven. 3. "The thoughts of heaven, and the hope thereof, may well fustain a believer, were there never so many buts and wants in their present condition here." We will not be long together, faith he, there will be a feattering; but this may keep you from weeping and mourning, as those who have no hope, that the day cometh when we shall meet again, and never part afunder. It is really a wonder that we have fo few ferious and folacing thoughts of coming to heaven: there are none who look for a rich loading coming home by fea, but they will comfort themselves in the expectation of it; why do we not then comfort ourselves in the thoughts

of heaven, fince we profess to have a hope of being there? even because we are carnal and earthly; and it fays, that we either think heaven little worth, or that it is an infufficient and unvalid right that is to be had to it, or that we do not really believe it. All the filver and gold in the world comforts not a poor body, because he hath no hope to come by it; so there are not a few hearers of the gospel, who hear much of heaven, and of the hope of it, that never refresheth them. A fifth reason may be, "To waken up longing defires, and to fharpen and put an edge upon an appetite, in his followers, after heaven, and to teach them not to place their happiness on any thing on this fide heaven:" otherwise he would never 'rave put their satisfaction to a term so far off: But he overleaps (to speak so with reverence) all the brave days that they had and were to have here, and gives them this for their full fatisfaction, that the day is coming when he will " drink the wine new with them in his Father's kingdom;" and would have them; in their flight, never refting nor fitting down, till they be there; for he fends them away hungering for that communion-table. And we would yet again exhort and befeech you to study to be in case to go from the communion, and from every fermon, having fome ferious thoughts of heaven, and longings for it; believing that the joyful day is coming, when Christ and ye will meet, and never flied or feparate again; when "ye shall be with him where he is, and be fet with him at his table, and on his throne," never to rife off it any more again: bleffed be God, that that defirable day is coming. Believers in Christ, cheer yourselves in the hope of it. If there be any of you (as, alas! I fear there be very many) that relish not this bleffed change, there is a fad and forrowful change before you. O be bufy, very bufy to have your interest in Christ, and the hope of heaven, well fecured, by union and communion with him here; that so ye may have the wellgrounded hope of heaven, and may frequently draw

comfort from it: and O that we could funder fo! The little inch and moment of time that we have, will foon and very quickly wear away, and be at an end: go then, dear friends, with this well fixed refolution, that ye must needs, in God's own way, have heaven, and be eternally happy in the foul-satisfying and ravishing enjoyment of that fullest and sweetest, never to be interrupted, communion, that will be there: and thank God and Christ the Mediator for the least meafure of the well-grounded hope of it; and make it your business to have your conversation suited to, and finelling strong of that blessed hope.



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